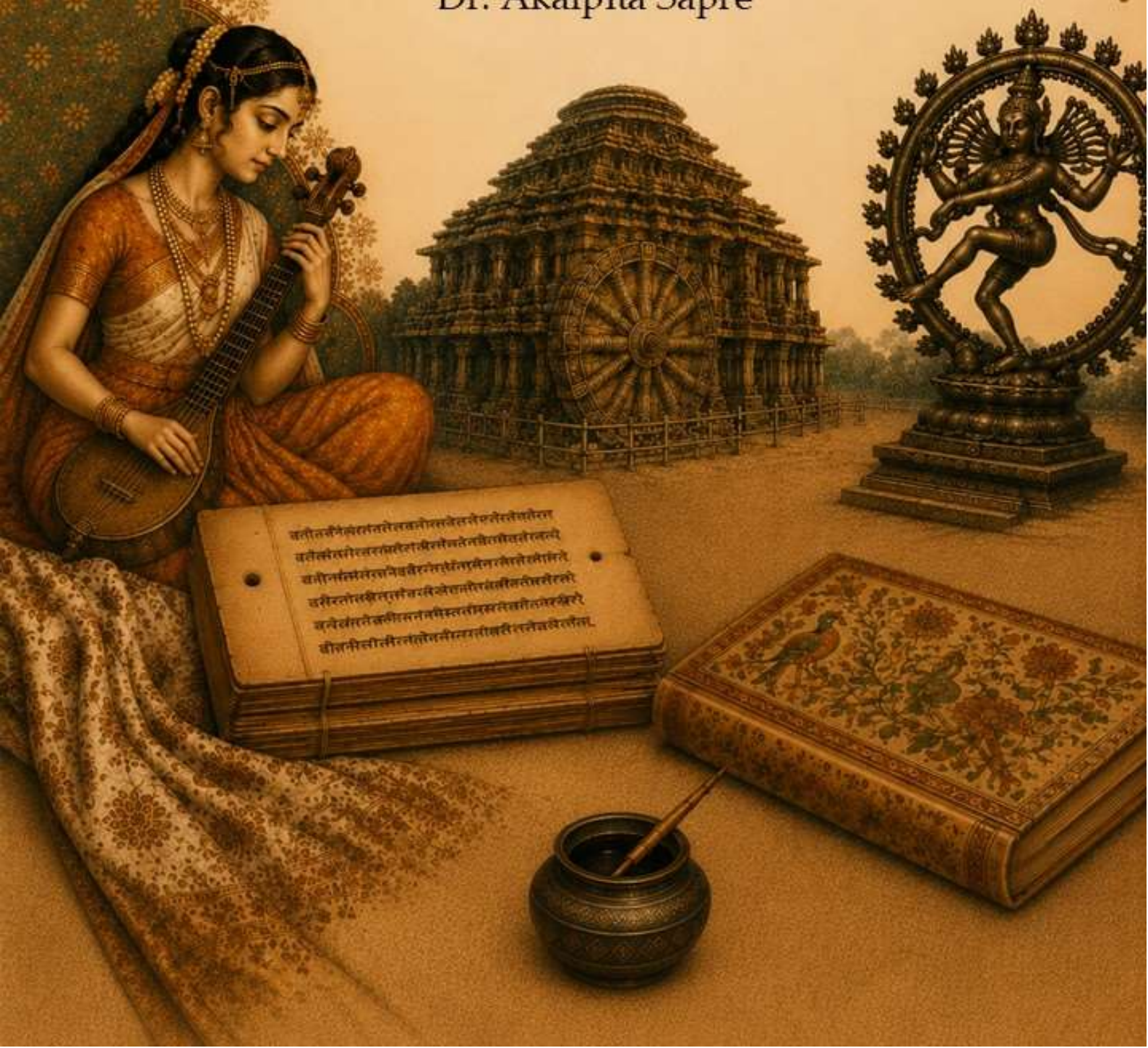
Indian Culture *in* Art and Literature

VOLUME I

Editors
Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao
Dr. Akalpita Sapre



Indian Culture *in* Art and Literature
Volume 1

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Editorial

It gives us immense pleasure to present the proceedings of the three-day National Conference, **"Indian Culture in Art and Literature,"** organized from 9–11 April 2025 by Shri Balmukund Lohia Centre of Sanskrit & Indological Studies, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune.

The conference was organized in the hybrid mode (one day in in person and two days in online mode). The scholars from different states of India participated in this conference. Prof. Madhavi Kolhatkar delivered the keynote address. Prof. Deepak Kannal was the speaker for the Valedictory function. Prof. Manjusha Gokhale was the Chief Guest for the Valedictory function.

India, a land of vibrant diversity and ancient heritage, boasts a rich cultural tapestry woven with threads of art and literature. These two forms of expression have served not only as very important sources and mirrors reflecting the society but also as powerful forces shaping its values, beliefs and traditions. Indian art is not merely aesthetic but is also deeply symbolic. Each form of art, be it painting, sculpture (both of stone and other materials) or architecture, tells a story, conveying religious beliefs, mythological narratives and social customs and traditions. It is a part of the material sources that tell us a lot about the life in ancient period. The sources like the epigraphs, coins and the excavated remains also join hands with them to narrate different stories of the ancient Indian culture. The reflection of Indian culture can be seen through the various types of material sources created till the beginning of the foreign rule after 13th–14th century CE.

Indian literature, through ages, with its vast expanse of languages and genres, echoes the diversity of its people. From the ancient hymns of the Vedas to the epic tales of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, literature has been a source of wisdom, entertainment, numerous traditions, festivals, and moral guidance. The works of Kalidasa and many other renowned Sanskrit playwrights, continue to captivate audiences with their poetic beauty and profound insights into human nature. The Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali literature also have a large number of texts expressing the plethora of details of ancient Indian culture.

This long legacy of Indian culture has been studied, discussed, written upon and has also been published by many scholars in India as well as from other countries. Yet, there is lot to be researched and brought to light. Hence Shri Balmukund Lohia Centre

of Sanskrit and Indological Studies of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, decided to organize a three-day National Conference entitled, '**Indian Culture in Art and Literature'** to bring to light the hitherto unknown facets of Indian culture as they are seen through art and literature. Considering the scope of the theme, it was decided that the same theme would be used for the national conference consecutively for three years. Thus, this becomes the first of a series of three and hence is titled as '**Indian Culture in Art and Literature 1.0'.**

Following the theme of the conference, numerous scholars from different parts of the country contributed research papers during these three days. The keynote address was given by Prof. Madhavi Kolhatkar on the lines of the central theme of the conference. The address was entitled as, "Culture Presented in the Literature with special reference to Rāmāyaṇa". Many senior scholars presented their research in this conference with the help of either the material sources or the literary sources. They are Prof. Prasad Joshi, Prof. V. Selvakumar, Dr. Abhijit Dandekar, Dr. Shreenand Bapat, Dr. Prachi Moghe, Dr. Mugdha Gadgil, Dr. Jaya Jose, Dr. Parth Chauhan, Dr. Kaushik Gangopadhyay, Dr. Varada Khaladkar, Dr. Nalini Waghmare and Dr. Prabodh Shirvalkar. It was a pleasant experience to listen to some of the young scholars presenting their research in this conference.

They were Dr. Rajashri Kshirsagar, Rasika Vaze, Vibha Oke, Ashok Damle, Mugdha Chitale, Sira Athale, Sapna Balagopal, Vaishali Chavan, Sachin Dixit, Shreeya Dixit Nachare, Vaishali Dugad, K. Mahadevan Menon, Kaumudi Kaldhonkar, M.R. Ramesh, Sakshi Mahamulkar, Prabhakar Ram Mishra, Brishti Mitra, Purva Parab and Pari Tamilaruvi, Atharva Pingle, Jayesh Potnis, Sagarika, Snigdha Saha, K.M. Saraswati, Ajaykumar Sharma, Ajay Sonawane and Mrunal Deshpande, Mira Sontakke, Sampada Walimbe. Along with this the in-house faculty members of the SBLCSIS also presented their research papers. They are Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao, Dr. Ambarish Khare, Dr. Akalpita Sapre, Dr. Manisha Puranik and Mr. Amod Kelkar. However, due to various constraints of the paper presenters, all of them could not send the papers for publication. There, some of the papers, though presented in the conference, are not published in this volume. In all, along with the keynote address, thirty-five research papers are included in the proceedings. The scholars have used the diacritical marks or otherwise, according to their own choice. The editors have not changed the form of the article provided by the researcher.

We are grateful to Hon. Vice Chancellor of the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Prof. Dr. Geetali Tilak and The Registrar Dr. Suvarna Sathe for their support and cooperation for the successful conduct of this National Conference. We thank **Geerwanjyoti Prakashan** to publish on **Google Book** and **Play Store** at global platform and Mrs. Sharvari Katdare for the layout of the volume. We are thankful to those, especially the teaching and non-teaching staff of the S.B.L.C.S.I.S., who helped us in organizing the conference and the publication of this proceeding. We hope that the scholars, researchers and interested people would welcome this publication.

Guru Pūrṇimā — Manjiri Bhalerao

29th July 2026 — Akalpita Sapre

Pune — **Editors**

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The Culture Presented in Literature, With Special Reference to Rāmāyaṇa

Madhavi Kolhatkar

(Keynote Address)

Introduction

Friends, what is culture? Regarding it, I would like to quote Merril and Eldredge (1952, p.42), "The classic definition of culture was given … by E.B.Tylor. Subsequent definitions are, for the most part, refinements and paraphrases of his original statement that, "…culture … is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." This definition includes, according to Merril and Eldredge, such products of group life as folkways, technic ways, mores, and other group expectations…"

"Culture is a growing whole acquiring new elements as it is handed down from one generation to the next, and spreading to new groups of peoples. The history of culture is, in a real sense, the history of man as a human being." "Culture is," concludes White, "a symbolic, continuous, cumulative, and progressive process."

Further, important is the idea of the authors that (p.43) "The fundamental basis of culture is in the minds of men, not in the external manifestations. Ideas are the foundations of culture; and in this process, assimilation acquires the position of a prime phenomenon."

Literature, the source of culture

Naturally then, the main source to know about the ideas or concepts in ancient culture is literature and history. A poet has rightly said, 'विना संस्कृतं नैव संस्कृतिः.' Equally true is its converse, 'यत्र संस्कृतं तत्र संस्कृतिः.' Therefore, when we study and read Sanskrit, especially the Vedas, the epics and the purāṇas, we come to know about our cultural history, heritage, and also sometimes its unique cultural features. It will mainly be the Rāmāyaṇa which is going to be studied in this regard.

The speciality of Rāmāyaṇa

One important point should be remembered regarding Rāmāyaṇa that its composition itself is for the depiction of a person who is virtuous, valourous, knower of dharma, grateful, truthful, firm on his vow, of good character, engaged in the welfare of all the beings; in short, having all the qualities of a noble person, 1.1.2-18. Moreover, the text abounds with the words such as nyāyataḥ, yathānyāyam, yathāvat, yathākalpam, yathāvidhi, yathākālam, yathoktam, śāstrataḥ, yathāśāstram, vidhānataḥ, vidhivat, vidhipūrvam, śāstradṛṣṭena karmaṇā, and similar others, which shows that everything, every action has a certain procedure, certain way of doing it, a certain ritual. It is quite understandable that when Daśaratha has the desire to perform a sacrifice to have progeny, he announces, 'तदहं यष्टुमिच्छामि शास्त्रदृष्टेन कर्मणा । कथं प्राप्स्याम्यहं कामं बुद्धिरत्र विचार्यताम्,' 1.8.9 'I want to give the offerings with the acts seen in the śāstras and think how I can get it;" and also, following his request the priest also assures, 'इष्टिं तेऽहं करिष्यामि पुत्रीयां पुत्रकारणात् । अथर्वशिरसि प्रोक्तैर्मन्त्रैस्सिद्धां विधानतः,'1.15.2, "I will perform the sacrifice for you to obtain progeny with proper sacrificial procedure and with relevant mantras." But even while giving fruits to Visvamitra there is followed a proper procedure, 'विश्वामित्राय धीमते । यथान्यायं मुनिवरः फलमूलमुपाहरत्,' १.५१.३. A simple act of offering food to people in the sacrifice; but it is also advised by Vasiṣṭha to be done vidhivat, "... तथा जानपदस्यापि जनस्य बहुशोभनम् ॥1.12.11॥ दातव्यमन्नं विधिवत्सत्कृत्य न तु लीलया । 1.12.12. 'Similarly, the people from the kingdom are to be served good food with proper procedure and not līlayā, i.e., casually. In a verse further the

reason also is stated why proper way is to be observed, अवज्ञया न दातव्यं कस्यचिल्लीलयापि वा । अवज्ञया कृतं हन्याद्दातारं नात्र संशयः, 1.12.28. "It should not be given to anybody with disregard or casually. If performed with disregard, it no doubt kills or harms the giver." The others also then assure the priest, 'यथोक्तं तत्करिष्यामो न किञ्चित्परिहास्यते,' १.१२.१६; "We will do whatever is told and nothing will be omitted." Thus, it suggests that the society depicted in Rāmāyaṇa is highly sophisticated and cultured in every little detail. And hence, together with other aspects of culture mentioned in the beginning I would like to add here, one more item and that is ritual; ritual in Rāmāyaṇa.

A meaningful life cannot be without ritual. Everything or every action done repeatedly turns into ritual, which leads to certain benefits. Sometimes, the word is used in the derogatory sense as 'mechanical', suggesting thereby that it is without really having any meaning in it. Still, it has its own benefits. When an action becomes a ritual, it follows a certain order. It starts with collecting the necessary paraphernalia and after the main action is performed ends with disposing off the collected material. Gradually it leads to perfection of the action and changes the profane level to sacred. This is the idea expressed in 'यथोक्तं तत्सुविहितं न किञ्चित्परिहीयते । यथोक्तं तत्करिष्यामो न किञ्चित्परिहास्यते,' १.१२.१६;

The idea of obligation

The concept of the three obligations (ṛṇa) viz., obligation to God (deva-ṛṇa), obligation to ancient sages (ṛṣi-ṛṇa, also sometimes called vipra-ṛṇa) and obligation to ancestors (pitṛ-ṛṇa) in Indian culture is well-known.

See how this idea of debt is expressed in the Rāmāyaṇa. The context is: The great king Daśaratha called Śrī Rāma and told him, "Dear, tomorrow I am going to consecrate you as the future king. From then on, you will take care of this kingdom." As a reply to it, Śrī Rāma humbly requests his father, "You should continue to rule, father," to which Daśaratha responds,

"जातमिष्टमपत्यं मे त्वमद्यानुपमं भुवि । दत्तमिष्टमधीतं च मया पुरुषसत्तम ॥2.4.13

अनुभूतानि चेष्टानि मया वीर सुखानि च । देवर्षिपितृविप्राणामनृणोऽस्मि तथात्मनः ॥2.4.14."

The gist of these verses is, "I have got an unparallelled and desirable son like you, O best of the men, and thereby have paid off the debts to my ancestors. I have finished my studies and given away gifts, and thereby have paid off the debts to the sages and the brahmins. I have performed the ritual, and thereby have paid off the debts to gods." These are well-known ideas about debts. But what Daśaratha says next is very unique. He further continues, "And, o heroic man, I have enjoyed all the pleasures I wanted; and thereby have paid off the debt to my own self." What a great idea it is! Obligation to one's own Self! A man should enjoy all the pleasures he wants. He must fulfil his own worldly desires, of course understood is that not transgressing dharma. They should be best fulfilled with the feeling that it is a debt. There is a saying, iṣṭaṃ dharmeṇa yojayet. Whatever you want people to follow, add it as a religious rule. Then it is followed mandatorily. Thus, when it has become a debt to one's own self, one strives to fulfil his own desires and aspirations, which surely leads to prosperity and satisfaction.

However, there is one more important benefit achieved through paying off one's own debt. The most severe and still most common vice of man is jealousy. That is why an important adjective for a good man keeps coming up frequently in ancient texts, which is 'devoid of jealousy' (anasūyaka). Even Rāma was aware of the potential seriousness and harm of it. That is why, in the advice he gives to Sītā on his way to exile, he says to her, भरतस्य समीपे ते नाहं कथ्यः कदाचन । ऋद्धियुक्ता हि पुरुषा न सहन्ते परस्तवम् । तस्मान्न ते गुणाः कथ्या भरतस्याग्रतो मम, 2.23.23; "You should never praise me in the vicinity of Bharata. The prosperous men cannot tolerate others' praise. Hence you should never praise my virtues in front of Bharata, 2.23.23."

Anyway, when everybody tries to fulfil all his desires with efforts and does not give up the efforts until they are fulfilled, there lies the possibility that the very toxic and unhealthy feeling of jealousy might not arise in the society.

Ritual of building and entering hut

Well, Ayodhyā is a big city. So, it is no wonder that it is described in every detail, where it is found that the rules laid down by Vāstuśāstra might have been strictly followed there. But even to build a hut in the forest, there occurs certain prescribed ritual. Thus, it is: After the three reached Citrakūṭa, Śrī Rāma tells Lakṣmaṇa, लक्ष्मणाऽऽनय दारूणि दृढानि च वराणि च । कुरुष्वाऽवस्थं सौम्य वासे मेऽभिरतं मनः, 2.50.13; "Lakṣmaṇa, bring strong and best logs of wood. We will make a dwelling place here. I would like to stay here." Listening to it, Lakṣmaṇa brings logs of various kinds of trees and prepares a hut. Then Śrī Rāma tells him to bring the flesh of a black antelope to give offerings to the hut, मांसमाहृत्य शालां यक्ष्यामहे वयम्, 2.50.15. Here I would like to make a remark regarding interpolations in the epics. Interpolations have various purposes. Here as if to make the purpose known to the reader, a line is interpolated, कर्तव्यं वास्तुशमनं सौमित्रे चिरजीविभिः after 2.50.15, which tells us that by that the evil from the vāstu is to be driven away, it is pacified and made fit to live in.
Lakṣmaṇa then kills a black antelope and throws its flesh in the fully ablaze fire. When it is properly cooked, he informs Rāma अयं कृष्णः समाप्तांगः श्रृतः कृष्णमृगो मया । देवतां देवसङ्काश यजस्व कुशलो ह्यसि ॥2.50.18; "The necessary parts of the black deer are obtained and cooked by me. Now O you, who looks like a god, give offerings to the deity. You are quite skilled in it." Then Śrī Rāma who is expert in uttering mantras takes bath, takes some vows and gives the pacificatory offerings, 19.
Then only all of them enter the hut with its roof nicely thatched with foliage.

God, temple and worship

An important aspect of culture is about the belief in the existence of God, and then the temples and worship. All the three are present in the Rāmāyaṇa.

In Rāmāyaṇa it is seen that for everything special efforts (tapas) are made. Things are not taken lightly. It is by tapas that they make themselves worthy of whatever comes to their lot. Thus, when Daśaratha told Rāma that he was going to be consecrated the next day, he did not forget to tell him that Rāma should keep a vow on that night and sleep on grass bed with his wife. His friends should keep a strict nocturnal vigil since there are many impediments involved in such undertakings, 2.4.23,24.

Being sent off by his father in this way, Rāma then goes to meet his mother Kausalyā and sees that she wearing silken garments is already in the temple (devatāgāra) restraining speech and praying for auspiciousness for the event. Having heard the news of the consecration, she holding her breaths and having her eyes closed was meditating on Janārdana. Paying homage to her, Rāma leaves her quarters and goes to his palace, 2.4.45.

Daśaratha sends his family priest Vasiṣṭha to him to advise him to keep a vow and observe it together with his wife. Accordingly, the sage comes to Rāma's palace and tells him, 'उपवासं भवानद्य करोतु सह सीतया, 2.5.8; "You please observe fast today together with Sītā. Not only he tells him, but also utters proper mantras and initiates Śrī Rāma in the vow together with Sītā, 10. The house of Rāma was in rejoicing mood. Moreover, the people on the streets also were rejoicing.

After the priest leaves, Śrī Rāma takes bath, keeps vow and with his beautiful wife goes to Nārāyaṇa, i.e., the temple of Nārāyaṇa, 2.6.1. He raises the pot of oblation near his head and then gives offerings in the blazing fire to that great god. He partakes the remnants of the oblation and sitting on the seat of grass meditates on God Nārāyaṇa. On that night, he sleeps in the temple of Viṣṇu, 4. Getting up early in the morning he gets the house decorated and gives the morning offerings. Then wearing silk garments, and bowing down to Madhusūdana, he sings the praise of

God and also makes the brahmins sing praises. All the inhabitants of Ayodhyā are happy to learn that Śrī Rāma is observing a vow together with Sītā, 9. Then there are jubilations all over Ayodhyā.

There is one more reference to gods and temples. After the marriage of Rāma and Sītā, and of his brothers in Janaka's kingdom, all of them came back to Ayodhyā, and the new brides were welcome by the queens. Then all those beautiful daughters-in-law wearing silken garments and greeted with auspicious blessings went immediately to the temples and worshipped the deities there, मङ्गलालम्भनैश्चापि शोभिता: क्षौमवाससः । देवतायतनान्याशु सर्वास्ता: प्रत्यपूजयन् ॥1.77.13॥

These are the references of the temples in the palaces. However, the verses 2.6.11 and 13 refer to those in the city as well सिताभ्रशिखराभेषु देवतायतनेषु च । ... ध्वजाः समुच्छ्रिताश्चित्राः पताकाश्चाभवंस्तदा 11, 13 ॥ There were beautiful banners of various colours and flags hoisted on the temples having their cupola (śikhara) like white clouds.

The status of woman

1. Widow

सेवमाने दृढं सूर्ये दिशमन्तकसेविताम् ।
विहीनतिलकेव स्त्री नोत्तरा दिक्प्रकाशते ॥३.१५.८॥

While thinking about any culture or religion, it is important to consider the place of woman in the society. I would like to start the topic with a passage important in this regard.

After receiving the message of the minister, Bharata immediately comes back to Ayodhyā and goes to his father's palace first. When he cannot see him there, he goes to his mother's palace. His mother, Kaikeyī almost jumps from her golden seat with joy when she sees him coming. Bharata holds her feet. Kaikeyī asks about him fondly, asks how the journey was, and also enquires about her maternal family. Bharata says, "Money, gems, gifts, etc. will be reaching soon. Since the messengers told me to hurry on my way, I rushed ahead. Now tell me, mother, where is my father? He is not in his own palace. He used to be mostly in your palace. But I cannot see him here also. Tell me immediately where he is. I want to get to his feet. Or, is he in mother Kausalyā's palace?" Imagine friends, seeing Kaikeyī, Bharata gets no idea that king Daśaratha is no more in this world. This means that there is no change whatsoever in Kaikeyī's outward appearance. Her face, clothes, jewellery etc. is not even slightestly different. Isn't it surprising? Well, suppose that Kaikeyī might have been a little different, not traditional, may be. But after hearing Bharata's voice, Kausalyā and Sumitrā also come to meet Bharata who also show no sign of change in appearance. Bharata does not have even slightest doubt about the mishap in the family. In the case of Kausalyā, only change mentioned is she is pale (vivarṇā) and her clothes are soiled (malināmbarā), 2.69.3. So, it seems that at least in the times of Rāmāyaṇa, there were no restrictions forced on widows. When might it have come into practice then? Is it because of the constant invasions from the 12th/13th century-y onwards and abuse of Hindu women by invaders?

2. Different types of women

There occurs a story in Rāmāyaṇa that Kuśanābha, the son of Kuśa and his wife Ghṛtācī gave birth to hundred best daughters. They were very beautiful, young and well-ornamented, and were rejoicing in a garden. Vāyu came there and asked them to marry him. They rejected the offer and told him that they could make him fall from his position, but they are guarding their tapas and do not want to waste it. They told him to ask their father for their hand, since he was their master and also the supreme deity. The one whom he will choose to marry them will be their husband. Listening to it, Vāyu became very angry and entering them made them crooked. Seeing them in such condition, and after coming to know what had happened, Kuśa praised his obedient daughters and discussed about their marriage with the ministers.

After reading this, one forms the impression that the daughters were very obedient at that time and followed their father's decision, 1.31.9-1.32.10.

But suddenly there is a twist in the narration. The author starts telling another story in the immediately succeeding verse. Thus, it is, "At the same time, there was a great sage called Cūlin who was practising asceticism. A Gāndharvī called Somadā, daughter of Ūrmilā was serving him with much respect. The sage became pleased with her, told her so and told to ask anything she wanted from him, 1.32.14. She said to him, "I do not have husband and I am not wife of anybody. I want a religious son from you endowed with brāhma tapas. तस्याः प्रसन्नो ब्रह्मर्षिर्ददौ पुत्रममनुत्तमम् । ब्रह्मदत्त इति ख्यातं मानसं चूलिनः सुतम, 1.32.18, 'The sage pleased with her gave his own best mental son to her!'

Thus, it can be said that as in any other society, in Rāmayaṇa also exists variety of human beings at a given time.

3. Śrī Rāma and Sītā

There is one more important point which should be mentioned here. When Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā came to live in Daṇḍakāraṇya, there appeared a carnivorous huge man, talking very loudly and looking like a towering mountain peak. He was a demon named Virādha. Seeing the three of them, he ran towards them, took Sītā in his lap and said, "Oh, you are ascetics. How can you live with a woman? I'll fight with you both, drink your blood and this beautiful woman will be my wife," 3.2.10. Hearing this, Sītā started trembling with fear. Śrī Rāma's throat dried up and he said to Lakshmana, "परस्पर्शात्तु वैदेह्या न दुःखतरमस्ति मे । पितुर्विनाशात्सौमित्रे स्वराज्यहरणात्तथा, 3.2.19; "There is nothing more painful to me, not even father's death or the loss of kingdom, than a stranger touching Sītā." At that time, Lakṣmaṇa boosted his courage saying, "Oh, you yourself are the refuge of beings like Indra himself. And why do you grieve when I am your servant, 3.2.21." Then, Rāma and Virādha had a fight, and Śrī Rāma killed the demon with his sharp arrows, 3.3.10. Having killed the demon, Rāma embraced Sītā and consoled her. This seems to be very befitting to puruṣottama Rāma. The problem is then why his behaviour is different when he brings her back from Rāvaṇa? It seems that the relevant text should be minutely checked again.

4. Rājyaśulka, an important feature in Ramāyaṇa

In Rāmāyaṇa comes a reference that Rāma tells Bharata that before marrying Kaikeyī, Daśaratha promised Kaikeyī's father that he would grant anuttama rājyaśulka for Kaikeyī. Now what is the possible meaning of the word rājyaśulka? The question arises since an American scholar Sheldon Pollock has completely misunderstood the word and has misrepresented it causing harm to the epic and the characters in it.

The word literally means, 'the kingdom as the price.' However, kingdom does not mean here the actual kingdom or a part of the land of the kingdom. It is not possible. The kingdom must remain united and the king the sovereign. The word can be explained as, 'the revenue of the portion of the part of the kingdom allotted to the would-be bride as the bride-wealth.' Even after marriage, the queen will have that as her own right and will be entitled to have the income coming from it as her own purse. She will have the right to spend it the way she wants. Neither the king, nor anybody else would have any right on it.

Now the question is what is the proof for this?

In the Rāmāyaṇa itself we find evidence to this in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa. When Rāma is about to leave for forest, Lakṣmaṇa also wants to follow him. At that time Rāma explains to him how he should stay in Ayodhyā and take care of his father and mother. To it, Lakṣmaṇa replies,

तवैव तेजसा वीर भरतः पूजयिष्यति । कौसल्यां च सुमित्रां च प्रयतो नात्र संशयः ॥2.28.6॥

कौशल्या बिभृयादार्या सहस्रमपि मद्विधान् । यस्यास्सहस्रं ग्रामाणां संप्राप्तमुपजीवनम् ॥2.28.7॥

तदात्मभरणे चैव मम मातुस्तथैव च । पर्याप्ता मद्विधानां च भरणाय यशस्विनी॥2.28.8॥

tavaiva tejasā vīra bharataḥ pūjayiṣyati |
kausalyā ca sumitrā ca prayato nātra saṃśayaḥ ||2.28.6||
kauśalyā bibhṛyādāryā sahasŚrīrāmapi madvidhān |

yasyāssahasraṃ grāmāṇāṃ saṃprāptamupajīvanam || 2.28.7||
tadātmabharaṇe caiva mama matustathaiva ca |
paryāptā madvidhānāṃ ca bharaṇāya yaśasvinī || 2.28.8 ||

"No doubt Bharata will take care of Kausalyā and Sumitrā remembering your brilliance or strength, 2.28.6." Then is the following verse which is very important in the present context, "Kausalyāmātā can support thousands of people like me, because she has got a thousand villages to support her." It means she gets the income from thousand villages. From that she can definitely support herself. This is a noteworthy unique feature of Indian culture. The practice has been seen continued even in modern times, when it is mentioned as 'for sāḍī-coḷī' in Marathi.

Now there is no problem to say that Śrī Rāma is telling Bharata that our father has promised your grandfather 'anuttama rājyaśulka' 'a lavish amount as bride-wealth for your mother Kaikeyī.

Reference to machine

After coming back to Ayodhyā from his uncle's house, Bharata comes to know about his father's death and the exile of Śrī Rāma. He is firm on not being enthroned on the kingdom and decides to go to the forest and bring Śrī Rāma back. At that time, in the context of making passable roads through the forest occur some verses which have the word yantra in it. It makes one curious about what sort of yantra can there be at that time. The verses read:

अथ भूमिप्रदेशज्ञाः सूत्रकर्मविशारदाः । स्वकर्माभिरताः शूराः खनका यन्त्रकास्तथा ॥2.74.1

कर्मान्तिका स्थपतयः पुरुषा यन्त्रकोविदाः । तथा वर्धकयश्चैव मार्गिणो वृक्षतक्षकाः ॥2.74.2

From these verses it does not become clear what sort of yantra there might have been. But there occurs some description before, which suggests some kind of machine having geared wheels. Thus, it is: When Śrī Rāma left the palace for exile, king Daśaratha also followed him together with his wives. All of them were in pitiable condition dragging themselves to have the last glimpses of their son. The king was requesting Sumantra to take the chariot slowly so that he can see Śrī Rāma. However, it was very difficult for Śrī Rāma to see the pitiable condition of his parents. He, therefore, told Sumantra to increase the speed of the horses to go out of the city as fast as possible. At that time the expression is used, तिष्ठेति राजा चुक्रोश याहि याहीति राघवः । सुमन्त्रस्य बभूवात्मा चक्रयोरिव चान्तरा, 2.35.33. The king was crying, "Stop! And Rāghava was saying, "Go! Go!" Sumantra found himself as if being between two wheels." Here Sumantra cannot be between the two wheels running parallel to each other like those of a cart or a chariot. It suggests that he was as if caught between the two wheels moving against each other squeezing the object caught between them; something like the wheels or two drums, one moving in clockwise direction and the other in the anticlockwise, which can crush the sugarcane to get juice.

It was Śrī Rāma then who made Sumantra free telling him, "If the king asks you afterwards why you did not obey him and went slow, tell him that you could not hear what he said!" Listening to this, Sumantra immediately speeded the horses even though they were already running in full speed.

This reference clearly indicates the use of gears and hence, lever also was known in the Rāmāyaṇa times.

Provision of arms and missiles

It has been observed in Rāmāyaṇa that even though Ayodhyā is said to be fortified from all sides, is really unconquerable as its name suggests, has moats and other devices for protection, much precaution is taken to maintain its security. The army is always kept ready.

Similarly, Viśvāmitra also, while going to forest flanked by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, the most powerful warriors on both his sides accompanying him for guarding his sacrifice, gives Rāma some additional weapons or missiles.

He tells Rāma that being very much pleased with him he is going to give him missiles (astras), by which he can bring all his enemies under control, 1.26.3. Then one by one, he goes on

enumerating those, daṇḍacakra, kālacakra, viṣṇucakra, vajra, brahmaśiras and so on. He then asks him to accept them immediately. Then together with those he passed on to Rāma the relevant mantras also, 4-21. While doing so, he was following proper ritual. Entering the sacred plane, facing east, the great sage offered those to Rāma. When the sage was uttering the mantras, the valuable astras, one by one appeared there near Rāma at his service. Rāma accepted them and told them to be stable in his mind. 'मानसा मे भविष्यध्वम्, 2.26.25,' he said to them. It means Rāma carefully memorized all those mantras to be able to retrieve them whenever necessary.

Rāma then asked the sage to teach him how to take back the astras also. The sage did so. All those weapons were present with folded hands before Rāma to take his orders. What Rāma said to them at that time is very important,

गम्यतामिति तानाह यथेष्टं रघुनन्दनः । मानसाः कार्यकालेषु साहाय्यं मे करिष्यथ, 1.27.12. 'You can go now. But be in my mind, and whenever necessary, help me." It means he committed them to memory so that they will easily be accessible when need arises. Memorization actually was an important feature and asset of the Indian society. Unfortunately, now, due to some wrong imitation we are not paying attention to it and losing it. It is time to increase the power of memory again.

This is not the only occasion when Rāma is bestowed with weapons. On his way to Viśvāmitra's hermitage, they come across many sages who bestow important weapons and missiles to him, which highlights the importance of continuous vigil and alertness though apparently the country might seem to have friendly relations with neighbours.

What is important is that after getting the mantras for using the missiles, Rama asks for their saṃhāra, 'the calling back of those weapons,' since he did not want any unnecessary use of the missiles. He says to Viśvāmitra, गृहीतास्त्रोऽस्मि भगवन्दुराधर्षः सुरैरपि । अस्त्राणां त्वहमिच्छामि संहारं मुनिपुंगव ॥१.२७.२.

Missiles often have self-destruct mechanisms, like timed fuses or automatic systems, to prevent unintended damage if they miss their target or become uncontrollable, ensuring they don't continue on their trajectory indefinitely. Does this reference point to some such device present at that time?

Etiquette

Etiquette is a very important feature of any culture. It is the forms, manners, and ceremonies established by convention as acceptable or required in social relations, in a profession, or in official life. Etiquette makes people comfortable and at ease. It shows that they value and respect each other. Etiquettes promote kindness, consideration, and humility as well. More the number of etiquettes in society, smoother the transactions and relations between the persons. Moreover, it releases the tension in difficult times. Many such etiquettes are found observed in the Rāmāyaṇa. Some important ones will be noted here.

1. While leaving for forest, Śrīrāma along with Dasharatha, Kausalya, and others, bids farewell to his other three hundred mothers as well. At that time, he approaches them with folded hands and says, संवासात्परुषं किञ्चिदज्ञानाद्वापि यत्कृतम् । तन्मे समनुजानीत सर्वाश्चामन्त्रयामि वः, 2.34.34; "If there was any rudeness on my part due to ignorance while we were living together, please forgive me. I say goodbye to you all now."

2. There is another notable passage in the 2.44th sarga. The first line of the verse reads, विशालान् कोसलान् रम्यान् यात्वा लक्ष्मणपूर्वजः the elder brother of Lakshmana, crossed the picturesque and long-spread Kosala region. It is then followed by a few lines. They are interpolated, but are very important from a historical and cultural point of view and hence are quoted here:

अयोध्याभिमुखो धीमान् प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यमब्रवीत् ।
आपृच्छे त्वां पुरीश्रेष्ठे काकुत्स्थपरिपालिते ।
दैवतानि च यानि त्वां पालयन्त्यावसन्ति च ।

निवृत्तवनवासस्त्वामनृणो जगतीपतेः ।
पुनर्द्रक्ष्यामि मात्रा च पित्रा च सह सङ्गतः ।

The meaning is, "Then the wise Śrīrāma stood facing Ayodhyā and said with folded hands, 'I bid farewell to you, o great city protected by Kākutsthas, and the gods who guard you and dwell in you. I will see you again with my parents once I have ended my exile and repaid the debt of the great king.'

Here I am reminded of a practice in Japan. At the end of the day's work, the employees say goodbye to the workplace by looking back once again and bowing down to the workplace as they leave the workplace for the day. Even the drivers of the trains after getting down make sure that the train is parked in proper order, then bow down to it and then leave.

There is a reason why I am mentioning this practice. There is a book called 'Sāng Kuk Yūsā' written in 13th-century that tells the history of Korea. According to it, the queen of Korea named Heo Hwang-ok or Boju is originally from India and that too from Ayodhyā. She was born in 32 CE and died in 189 CE. She came to Korea from Ayodhyā when she was sixteen years old and became the queen of the king Suro. Many other Indians went with her to Korea and also the Indian culture, which further spread in other far eastern countries also. Thus, she might have been instrumental in the great influence of Indian culture on Japanese culture.

The Government of India also has taken note of this, has released a postage stamp in memory of the Queen in 2019. Recently, in 2020, a memorial building also has been erected in the city of Ayodhyā. She may have been the reason for the introduction of this practice in Japan.

3. There is an expression bhadraṃ te which literally means, "may there be good for you!" and which is used in various contexts, meaning, 'take care,' 'don't worry,' 'well,' 'good night' and many others. It is similar to the present-day expression acchā.

4. When Bharata went to say good bye to his maternal grandfather, he was greeted with love and so many presents were sent with him not only for family members but also for the ministers etc. On his way back home, Bharata collects the water of the river as tīrtha 'sacred water' to take home.

5. After getting the message of the minister, Bharata rushed back to Ayodhyā. He was very much worried due to so many ill omens on his way back. Still, when he was greeted by the doorkeepers on the Vaijayanta gate, he does not forget to greet them back, स त्वनेकाग्रहृदयो द्वाःस्थं प्रत्यर्च्य तं जनम् । सूतमश्वपतेः क्लान्तमब्रवीत्तत्र राघवः, 2.65.23.

All these traditions are seen being carried out in the society, at least for last some thousand years. It shows how the literature can influence the society and culture, and vice versa.

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Translations of Meghadūta: Role of Culture

Sira Rahul Athale

Introduction

'Kālidāsa has absorbed India's cultural heritage, made it his own, enriched it, given it universal scope and significance.' (De 1957, 5)

Kālidāsa is the most famous poet of India and Meghadūta of Kālidāsa is one of the most popular literary works of Sanskrit literature. Kālidāsa's popularity is due to many reasons. The depiction of cultural heritage in his works is one of the most important aspect of it. It is also one of the most translated works.

First some definitions of culture are discussed, followed by the forms of translation. Later there is a brief discussion of the interaction between culture and translation. Then this interaction between culture and translation is shown using examples from various translations of Meghadūta.

Culture

'Culture … is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.' (White, n.d.)

Various experts from numerous fields have defined culture. Here are two definitions that are century apart. This shows how definitions change over time. English anthropologist Edward Tylor in the first paragraph of his Primitive Culture written in the nineteenth century gives the definition of the culture where the society is important (White, n.d.).

'Culture … consists in those patterns relative to behavior and the products of human action which may be inherited, that is, passed on from generation to generation independently of the biological genes.' (CARLA, n.d.)

A famous sociologist Parson, in 1949, defines culture that talks about the transfer of knowledge between different generations. Here the passing on of certain products of human actions like the love for a work of art is a part of culture.

'Culture is the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them.' (CARLA, n.d.)

American sociologist Lederach, in 1995, defines culture for a set or group of people rather than society. By the end of the twentieth century, some definitions of culture mention group of people rather than society.

These different definitions of culture give an idea how the love for Meghadūta transcended the generations; and to all the corners of the world. This love for Meghadūta can be seen from the heartfelt translations from all over the world over more than the two centuries.

Translation

The word translation can be defined as the process of turning an original or 'source' text into a text in another language. There are different forms of translation like written, online speech translation in real-time and so on. The paper discsses the written translation.

There are three types of written translations. **Intra-lingual**, monolingual or translation within the same language, for example Vedic Nighanṭu presenting strings of synonyms. Also one can consider the Sanskrit commentary on a Sanskrit work as an example of this type of translation. For example, commentary of Vallabhadeva on

Meghadūta. **Inter-lingual** translation or translation from one language to another. This is considered as the proper translation by many experts and is the topic of current paper. **Inter-semiotic** translation converts from the written word to the other medium.

Translation and culture

'… This is why translation, which aims at communicating the meaningful experience from one language to another presupposes bilingual competence. The more balanced and advanced the mastery of bilingualism the more facility he has in interpreting the bicultural data manipulated by the source language and the target language.' (Pattanayak, 1966)

The translation tries to communicate the meaningful experience from one language to another. A literary work creates an experience in the mind of a reader. The translation, tries to create similar experience in the mind of a reader of the work in the target language. The knowledge of the culture of both the societies is essential for the translator. Otherwise, this creation of experience will not be effective.

The intricate knowledge of both the languages is an important part of the cultural knowledge (Pattanayak, 1966). The translator needs different devices or constructs in the target language to convey the conceptual information contained in the source language. There are many such available linguistic devices. The two examples of such devices are Addition of information and Repetition of constituents leading to the change of meaning.

Addition of information: Suppose we are translating the English sentence, 'She has brothers.' to Sanskrit. Then we have to clearly know whether she has two brothers or more. Otherwise, the translation may not be correct.

Repetition of constituents: The repetition, or द्विरुक्ति, might convey different meanings depending on the word and cultural convention. For example, in three different languages given below, the repetition conveys different meanings.

Philippines language: Truly Truly = Perhaps (Doubt)

Malayo-Polynesian languages: bāhāsā bāhāsā = Languages (Plurality)

Sanskrit: kaṇṭhe kaṇṭhe = In each voice (each, every) (Pattanayak, 1966)

Meghadūta

Meghadūta, or literally a cloud-messenger, is a poem written by Kālidāsa. The poem has about 120–129 stanzas. It describes the message of a Yakṣa to his wife, to be conveyed through a cloud.

The Title

मेघदूतम्——मेघ एव दूतः मेघदूतः। The cloud as a messenger; स एव अभेदोपचारात्तत्संज्ञं काव्यम्। The same signifies the poem of the name by the identical treatment of a term (Kale 1947). There are other interpretations of the title. The title of the poem is a Bahuvrīhi compound and may be dissolved——मेघो दूतो यस्मिन् (काव्ये)। The poem is also known as *Meghasandeśa* or simply *Megha* in Southern India (Pathak, 1916). Or–मेघश्चासौ दूतश्च कर्मधारय। Then by transference of epithet it means the book describing the cloud-messenger (Ray, 1958).

The title is literally translated by many translators as the cloud messenger. The cloud of belonging, gives the importance to the emotional state of the Yakṣa than the function of the cloud as a messenger (Jarow, 2021). The title, The Transport of Love, gives the function of the cloud but does not refer to the cloud in the title (Nathan, 1976). In the beginning, the title was mostly literally translated. But in the twentieth and twenty-first century the English title translations stress different aspects of the poem.

A Proper Noun

कश्चित् कान्ताविरह-गुरुणा स्वाधिकारात्प्रमत्तः
शापेनास्तङ्गमित-महिमा वर्षभोग्येण भर्तुः।
यक्षश्चक्रे जनकतनया-स्नान-पुण्योदकेषु
स्निग्धच्छाया-तरुषु वसतिं रामगिर्याश्रमेषु ॥१॥

This is the first stanza of the book. The proper name Rāmagiri is kept as it is in some translations, but literally translated in the others.

High on the Mount of Rama a yaksha dwelt, who for neglect of duty
Had lost his great estate, sentenced by his Lord to a year of exile;
Grievous with separation from his dear wife, he stayed in hermit groves of gentle shade trees and waters hallowed by the baths of Janaka's child. (1)
(Edgerton, 1964)

Here the Mount of Rāma is the translation of Rāmagiri. Usually the name of the mountain, a proper noun, will not be translated.

A certain Yaksha, distressed by the heavy burden of separation from his beloved, and cursed by his master to diminish his glory, enjoyable during the rains, Made his abode in the hermitages of Rama's hill, where the trees have pleasant shade, in the holy waters of the daughter of Janaka's bath. (1) (SansAI, n.d.)

Here the machine translation is quite impressive, though it has similar lacuna as seen earlier.

अपने कार्य से असावधान, प्रिया के विरह से दुःसह, एक वर्ष तक भोगने वाले, स्वामी के शाप से नष्ट महिमा वाला, कोई यक्ष जनक की पुत्री के स्नान से पवित्र जल वाले, घने छाया वाले वृक्षों से युक्त, रामगिरि (पर्वत) के आश्रमों मे निवास करता था ॥१॥
(Sharma, 1998)

In this prose Hindi translation all the details are clearly given. The proper noun is not translated literally.

सुभग जलाशय---यांत नाहली वनवासी मैथिली
घन वृक्षावळ वितरी शीतल तीरावर सावली
रामगिरीवर यक्ष वसे त्या शापांकित होउनी
वर्षाचा निर्वास ललाटीं—विव्हल विरहानलीं! ॥१॥ (Kusumagraja, 1956)

In this Marāṭhī translation by Kusumāgraja, one of the greatest Marāṭhī poet, the proper name is kept as it is. He has used the flowery language along with an interesting word ललाटीं to show Yakṣa's fate.

These representative examples show the different approaches used in the translation of proper nouns.

Repetition of Constituents

मार्गं तावच्छृणु कथयतस्त्वत्-प्रयाणानुरूपं
सन्देशं मे तदनु जलद श्रोष्यसि श्रोत्रपेयम्।
खिन्नः खिन्नः शिखरिषु पदं न्यस्य गन्तासि यत्र
क्षीणः क्षीणः परिलघु पयः स्रोतसां चोपभुज्य ॥१३॥

This stanza has two instances of repetition of words. Kālidāsa has used repeated words to show different emotions. Some of the translators have not captured the exact meaning due to difference in the target language.

Listen, now, while I describe a path fitting for thy journey; thereafter,
O Cloud, thou shalt hear my message, a worthy draught for thine ears.
On this path shalt thou go, resting thy foot on mountains whenever weary;
Whenever spent, drinking the pure waters of fresh streams. (13)

(Edgerton, 1964)

The translators have used for खिन्नः खिन्नः and क्षीणः क्षीणः, whenever weary and whenever spent, respectively. This conveys the extreme emotion as is desired.

First, listen to the path that I will describe, suitable for your journey, Then, O cloud, you will hear my message, pleasant to the ears. Weary, weary, placing your foot on the mountain peaks, you will go were, Exhausted, exhausted, you will lightly drink from the streams of water. (13) (SansAI, n.d.)

The machine translation just replaces the repeated words with repeated words. Also, the translation here makes less sense than the previous one. So, the repeated words have changed some aspects of the machine translation. This would have been accepted in the verse form of translation but makes less sense in the prose translation. Here is an example of the prose translation that exactly captures the meaning (Pathak, 1916).

O cloud, listen to me who am describing the path fit to be pursued by thee, along which thou wilt travel resting on mountains when thou art much exhausted, and drinking the light waters of rivers when thou art exceedingly emaciated; thou wilt next hear my message expressed in agreeable words. (Pathak, 1916)

निरोप तुज सांगेन सखीस्तव परंतु करुणघन,
हवें कराया उचित पथाचें तुजला दिग्दर्शन;
शिणतां काया पहुड जरासा पर्वतशिखरांवर
क्षीण वाटतां नितळ झऱ्यांचें कर पाणी प्राशन ॥१३॥

Here Kusumāgraja uses extreme emotion in शिणतां and क्षीण.

There are other instances of repeated words in Meghadūta. Some translations do not capture the exact emotions. One of the reasons for these issues with translations can be translator's lack of the intimate knowledge of the culture of India.

Conclusion

The paper shows examples of certain translations that have successfully used similar expressions to the original Sanskrit text in the target language. In other examples, there were some shortcomings. The intricate understanding of the culture of India, which is evident in every stanza of Meghadūta, has improved the translations. The machine translations can be improved further in their understanding of the various linguistic devices dependent on the culture. Further work along these lines may improve human and machine translations of great poetic works from the days of yore.

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Cultural Reflections of Daana in Anushasana Parva of Mahabharata

Sapna Balagopal

Mahabharata is one timeless classic which continues to inspire and help people to deal with their everyday life due to its learnings and concepts even today though it was conceptualised long long ago. One such concept is Dāna. As per our Bharathiya tradition, Dāna has been given a lot of importance.

The word Dāna is a Sanskrit word meaning the act of giving, giving up, gift, part etc. Dāna can be traced back to Vedic traditions. While Dāna is typically given to one's person or family, Hindu Dharma also discusses charity or giving aimed at public benefit. The Rig Veda relates it to satya"truth" and emphasises the guilt felt from withholding from those in need. It uses da, the root of the word Dāna, in its hymns to refer to the act of giving to those in distress. Book 10, Hymn 117 talks extensively on Dāna. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad 5.2 describes Da Da Da or the Triple Da teaching which is most celebrated. These stand for self-control, charity and compassion. The Chāndogya Upanishad emphasises about Dāna being a way to contribute to man's quest for knowledge and salvation. Dāna is also spoken in other literatures of the Hindu tradition like the Rāmāyaṇam, the different Puranas and The Bhagavad Gita which is a part of Mahābhāratam.

Today am giving a glimpse into the aspects of Dāna as described by BhIśma Pithamaha to Yuddhishtra in the Anuśāsana Parva of The Mahābhāratam.

The main reason for my choosing Dāna is because in today's day and age Dāna seems to be a forgotten quality. To contribute to another's wellbeing is often forgotten as the focus seems more to fuel one and one's own. The importance of Dāna is not felt as we don't seem to find joy in it any more.

It was probably seen by our forefathers that man is incapable of giving on his own volition. Man is not capable of giving for the sake of giving, it seems. Hence these different customs were advocated by our ancients, so that Dāna or giving is somehow imbibed into our lives.

The Mahabharata at different points in its story has spoken about Dāna by many, but today I am making a humble attempt to present a glimpse into it.

In chapter 95 0f Anuśāsana Parva, Yuddhishtra asks BhIśma by whom was the custom of giving umbrellas and sandals at Śrāda introduced and for what purpose were those gifts given. Further these gifts were also given at other religious rites. So, what was the true meaning of this practice was his query.

So BhIśma pithamaha began his story of how it came about. It so happened that the sage Jamadagni of the Bhrigu race was practising with his bow. Taking aim, he used to shoot arrow after arrow and his wife Renuka used to retrieve it from afar also. The sage one day had shot all his arrows and lovingly requested Renuka to bring back all the arrows. Renuka, unable to bear the scorching heat, rested under the shade of a tree for a brief period. Then, she, fearing the curse of her husband, quickly collected all the arrows and returned to her husband, though her feet throbbing with pain. The Rishi, who by then was angry, repeatedly addressed and asked the cause for the delay. Renuka then explained that her hand and feet were scorched by the rays of the Sun and so she took shade causing the delay. At this the Rishi threatened to destroy the Sun with his fiery weapons. Jamadagni got his weapons ready and stood facing the Sun. Having seen this, the Sun approached the Rishi in a disguise of a Brahmana. Surya then in the guise of the Brahmana asked the Rishi how the Sun had offended him? The Brahmana explained that the Sun traverses the Sky and draws moisture from the earth and gives it back as rain.

The rains help in the growth of food and thus sustains and gives vitality to all beings. All the rites consequent on birth, religious observances, all articles in sacrifices, and acquisition of riches have their origin on food. All the good and sweet things in life originate from food. In fact, living creatures take so much effort for this food only so do be appeased and don't destroy the Sun. This is how he explained and gave reason for the Sun's behavior.

रमणीयानि यावन्ति यावदारम्भिकाणि च।
सर्वमन्नात् प्रभवति विदितं कीर्तयामि ते ॥२७॥ (chapter 95 Anuśāsana Parva)

Despite his entreaties Jamadagni was resolved to annihilate the Sun. Seeing no other way to escape the Rishi's wrath, the Sun asked the sage for protection and the Rishi smilingly acquiesced. Then the Rishi asked for a remedy for people to be saved from the heat. The Sun immediately gave him an umbrella and a pair of sandals. The umbrella would protect the head and the sandals, the feet. Thus, it came about that from that day on, these articles were gifted in all religious ceremonies. BhIśma pithamaha went on to tell Yuddhishtra that one who gifted these items would be considered meritorious in the three worlds.

Though these seem trivial at the outset, if one thinks a little deeply, one can understand that it is the small things in life which can make a huge impact. When one is feeling the heat of the Sun, the lack of protection of the extremities of the head and feet can actually upset a person's inner equilibrium. The physical body is pretty affected by the heat of the Sun. Irritation, discomfort, sweat, wounds on the feet can cause pain and disturbance and thus make one lose one's composure, leading one to react inappropriately. The repercussions could be alarming too. One small remedy could make a huge difference. Our ancients saw this and hence have given so much importance to a seemingly trivial gift.

The value of giving is given so much importance that even in the chapter of the history of Jamadagni BhIśma Pithamaha has spoken about daana. When one gifts water and other drinks one gains eternal fame. Giving foods helps one to acquire various articles of enjoyment. By presenting lights at dark places well frequented by people, helps people get good eye sight. By gifting good and beautiful objects, one gets a good memory and understanding. Distributing scents and garlands gives far reaching fame to giver. Those who abstain from shaving off their hair and beards get excellent children. A person who gives fruits and flowers gains sacred knowledge. Gifting cows of course has been mentioned time and again and results in entry to heaven for the giver. Gifting umbrellas helps people acquire palatial residence and giving sandals or shoes, good vehicles. Gifting clothes the giver gains personal beauty and gifting scents, a fragrant body in his next life. Also in many cases, what you give you get. What you give you get, many times over. This is the verse that must ring in our heads, reminding us to give others, all the time.

भक्ष्यान्नपानीयरसप्रदाता
सर्वान्समाप्नोति रसान् प्रकामम् ।
प्रतिश्रयाच्छादनसम्प्रदाता
प्राप्नोति तान्येव न संशयोऽत्र ॥३७॥ (Chapter 57 Anuśāsana Parva)

We have already seen that giving water and other drinks leads one to eternal fame. By extrapolation, one must discuss the digging of tanks and planting of trees. BhIśma discussed with Yuddhishtra the merits of digging tanks and how the water storage in different climates offers different benefits. The tank which retains water even in summer has the greatest merit and is equal to a horse sacrifice. In spring if water is retained then it is equal to Atiratra sacrifice and during rains if tank holds water, it is equal to Agnihotra

sacrifice. Thus, digging a tank was considered very meritorious and rightly so. No one can deny the gratitude one feels when water is offered to one parched with thirst. Thus, BhIśma outlines the benefit of gift of water and how it is above all other gifts. This must be the reason that to this day in our Bharathiya culture, one offers water to a guest who comes home either announced or unannounced. Whether the host is tired or ill, the guest is offered a drink of water. How beautifully such niceties were imbibed in the day-to-day culture of the lives of people. The promise of heaven would make the most ordinary or lazy thinker to give a thirsty person.

Today we talk about planting trees and increasing the forest cover since rains have become erratic and sparse. BhIśma stressed the relevance of planting trees. One who plants trees gets adulation in this world and the next. He rescues his ancestors of both his paternal and maternal lines. The trees planted thus become a person's child. Trees give deities the flowers they grow. The departed manes are pleased by the fruits offered and the passersby get shade under the branches of trees. Trees offer succour to all creatures. From the smallest to the largest, any creature enjoys the benefit of shade on a hot day. Just as children save their parents, so also planting trees saves people in their afterlife. Thus, the importance of tree planting is emphasised time and again. Strictly speaking though planting trees might not be considered as Dāna but indirectly helping our Mother Earth and its people by planting trees is a great boon and a reward by itself. Thus, we see that Dāna in the smallest of things and the simplest of things can be beneficial both to the giver and the receiver. Mahābhāratam has focused so much on daana that we need to read, explore and possibly inculcate those values in our lives, our children and of course our future generations as what we sow, we reap many times over. Thank you for your time and your listening.

The Cultural Lexicon of Site Protection: Semiotic and Linguistic Dimensions

Manjiri Bhalerao

The concept of site protection extends far beyond physical fences and security patrols. To understand how we safeguard spaces one must analyze the Cultural Lexicon of protection. This involves the signs, symbols, and language used to communicate "stay away," "respect," or "keep out" across time and culture. Across civilizations, including ancient India, this manifests in diverse forms, from protective chants and rituals to the use of auspicious symbols and spatial nomenclature. This study analyzes selected case studies from ancient India, exploring the employment of symbolic and linguistic strategies to safeguard monuments and sites against perceived malevolent influences.

1) **Guardian figures at the monuments or sites** - The first instance is of the guardian deities of different Buddhist cave sites. The Buddhist rock cut caves in India were created from around 2nd century BCE. Bhaje, Dist. Pune, is considered as one of the earliest cave sites. On the façade of the Caityagṛha can be seen a lot of decoration. However, a more than life size sculpture of female underneath a tree is also seen (Photo No.1) on the façade. As there are no textual sources available about the site of the Bhaje caves, it has been surmised by the scholars that this could be the guardian *yakṣī* of the site.

Photo No. 1 – Bhaja guardian figure

In case of Pitalkhora, Dist. Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, a guardian *yakṣa* figure was discovered near the entrance of the Caityagṛha (Deshpande 1959: 66 – 93). The most interesting features of this figure are his ears and the snake like ornament in his ear (Photo No. 2). The ear looks like the wings of the birds. This suggests that as the birds sense the impending calamity beforehand, similarly, the guardian *yakṣa* also senses such calamities and guards the site as well as the inhabitants there. Further his power is also suggested with the use of the snake as his ear ornament. It is suggested that one who sports the wild animals likes as his ornament would be able to guard the inhabitants of the site and the monument itself.

Photo No. 2 – Pitalkhora guardian *yakṣa*

Similar figure of a male *yakṣa* has also been observed near the Chaityagriha at Kondane, Dist. Raigad. (Photo No. 3) Here the *yakṣa* is characterized by the peculiar ears like the wings of the birds. The front portion of the face is broken but whatever remains shows the fine quality of sculpture of the guardian.

Photo No. 3- Kondane guardian *yakṣa*

All these instances suggest that the super human beings like the *yakṣa* and *yakshi* were placed at the key points of the rock cut caves so that they would protect the monuments as well as the residents therein.

2) Auspicious symbols as protective measures –

A) Śrivatsa and Triratna- The use of auspicious symbols in Indian artistic repertoire had a major application of protection. Many monuments, both rock cut as well as structural, carry such symbols. Two of the most important auspicious symbols are the Śrivatsa and Triratna. Both of these symbols have significant place in the religious art of all the religious of ancient India. As a large number of examples of the most ancient architecture of India is found in the form of the Buddhist monuments, we would take some examples from them.

The Buddhist rock cut caves are the earliest extant forms of rock cut architecture of the historical period, which are available to us for this study. Many Buddhist rock cut sites like Pitalkhora, Nashik (Photo No. 4), Junnar and structural *stūpa* sites like Bharhut, Sanchi (Photo No. 5) etc carry these symbols as a part of the decoration.

Photo No. 4 – Caityagṛha, Nashik caves

Photo No. 5 – Sanchi Torana

It was believed that with the use of these auspicious symbols, the evil forces will not be able to enter the complex of these monuments. Many amulets and necklaces have been noted in the sculptures as well as discovered in the excavations that suggest their use as protective charms. In the Buddhist context, the Triratna represents the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Saṅgha (community). Taking "refuge" in these three is the ultimate act of spiritual protection. Hence these are seen used at various sites in ancient India.

B) Sphinx, Griffins etc - The Sphinx is a mythical animal which is noticed in the ancient Egyptian and Greek art and architecture quite frequently. Similarly in case of India, we get to see the depiction of Sphinx in the architecture. The original concept of a Sphinx comes from Egypt where it was depicted as a male and was a noble figure. In the Greek context the Sphinx was a woman who brought destruction and bad luck. However, both the sphinxes were placed at the entrance of the architecture, mostly religious. In Indian context one can see the depiction of sphinx in the religious monuments, that too either at the entrance of the cave or inside the Caityagṛha. The most noteworthy examples of the Sphinx are at Junnar (Lenyadri group Cave No. 6) (Fergusson & Burgess 1988 [reprint]: 255), Karla Caityagṛha and in the veranda of the Cave No. 10 at Nashik (Burgess 1988 [reprint]: 514) (Photo No. 6). The inscriptional evidence at Karla and Nashik reveals that at both these places there were foreign donors. Here the foreign donors probably carried some myths along with them and had depicted the symbols of guardians in the monuments for which they had given money.

Photo No. 6 – Cave No. 10, Nashik

Griffin – Griffins are legendary creatures with the body of a lion and the head and the wings are that of an eagle. The lion is considered as the king of the beasts and the eagle is considered as the king of the birds. The combination of these powerful animal and bird made the Griffin as an exceptionally powerful. It has been believed that the Griffins were the guardian of the treasures and priceless possession. In due course of time, they were also considered as the symbol of the divine power and the guardian of religious places. Eventually we start getting the depiction of the griffins in the Indian subcontinent. They can be seen on the Eastern Gateway at Sanchi as well as on the pillar capitals of the Cave No.s 17 and 3 (Photo No. 7) at Nashik. Interestingly enough we find that this cave no.

17, which was the donation of a Greek trader (Yavana) called as Indragnidatta. He was a resident of Dattamitri. He had probably used this motif on the capital to safeguard the cave, which he mentions in the inscription as a combination of the Caityagṛha hall) and *vihāra*. Similarly, another cave at Nashik i.e. no. 3 also has griffins on the pillar capital. But this cave is not a donation of any foreigner, in fact it is a donation of the Sātavāhana royal family. However, there is a Caityagṛha inside this cave along with the *vihāra.* There is a possibility that the concept of the griffins guarding the religious architecture became popular and was used at various places.

Photo No. 7, Cave No.3, Nashik

C) Triskelion - The Triskelion is a symbol which has three arms that are shown moving in both clockwise and anti-clockwise directions. It is popularly known as the three-armed *swastika*. It occurs frequently on ancient Indian Punch marked coins and the on the facades of some Buddhist rock cut caves. These caves are in fact the Caityagṛha i.e. Cave No. 18 at Nashik (Photo No. 8) and the Caityagṛha of the Isolated group in Junnar. At all these places the triskelion is seen clearly. On the coins of the Wai Janapada and the previous Punch Marked Coins this symbol is seen on a large scale. Hence even though its association in India is not very clear, one thing can be surely said that it had a significant place in ancient Indian visual repertoire. (Bhalerao 2006: 115-18)

Photo No. 8 – Cave No 18, Nashik

Other occurrences of the Triskelion motif include the artefacts associated with the Bronze Age European Neolithic and continuing via Iron Age Celtic Cultures, the Classical art of the Greco-Roman period ranging from 14th century BCE. till the early centuries of the Common Era. This symbol was also used in various countries like Sicily, Ireland, Greece and Roman warriors. In most of the contexts it has been used as a symbol for protection. It is also seen on various coins of Lydia, Sicily and some other European countries.

This symbol somehow reached India by 7th or 6th century BCE and was used on the Indian coins and monuments. It occurs frequently on ancient Indian Punch marked coins. In his comprehensive work on Punch Marked Coins, Rajgor (Rajgor, 2001) shows that the coins included in the Series No.s 18, 19, 21, 22, 26 and 30 bear the Triskelion as one of the symbols. The coins from Series 21 i.e. those found in the Babyal hoard bear some variants of the Triskelion (Rajgor, 2001: 72). In fact, all the main symbols on the

coins of this hoard have the Triskelion as the basic symbol. Similarly, the Avanti Janapada coins also bear a combination of the triskelion (Rajgor, 2001: 77 Type 432, 433, 434, 439; 78 Type 448,449). This symbol has also been reported occurring on the coins of Saurashtra and Kuntala Janapadas (Rajgor, 2001: Series 29, Type 502 to 512). Almost all the coins bearing this symbol are generally dated between c.7th century BCE to c.5th century BCE, irrespective of their provenance, by Rajgor.

As mentioned above, right from 6th century BCE, this symbol was used in different contexts in India. One can imagine that when the Punch Marked Coins were designed or when the decorative patterns of the rock cut caves were finalized, the artists were quite aware of the significance of these symbols through antiquity. The importance or association of this symbol could be of the auspiciousness or the protective quality of it.

Not much needs to be said about the protective charms or verses used by the devotees of all the religions for their protection. The famous verses of the compositions known as the Rāmarakṣā, Hanumāna Cālisā etc are chanted for the supposed protective powers that they contain. The Dharani Sutras, the chants of the text Mahāmāyūrī also were popular in ancient period for such qualities.

Thus, it can be clearly seen with these representative examples that ancient Indians had developed a cultural lexicon of protection which involved the signs, symbols, and language to give the message to "stay away," "respect," or "keep out" to the negative or evil forces across time and culture. There are many more such examples that can be studied from this perspective however we have considered a few for this study.

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Fresh Look on Rock Engravings of Goa and the Western Ghats of India

Vaishali Chavan

Fresh Look on Rock Engravings of Goa and the Western Ghats of India

Indian art is in existence days beyond recall. Rock engraving in India is famous and well-preserved in the world. New sites are found and continue to come up at various places. Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh was the site that changed the world's history. The paintings, rock engravings, and bruising are loaded with information on caves, rocks, and boulders of that era. That may be a way of communicating or telling the story of their life and that region, but if it is just an artwork then the artist must be intellectual, stylist, and very keen in observation. He thought to make colors for painting and use tools to engrave on rock and left impression of his life and era. He chose a location where paintings would be preserved well and petroglyphs, geoglyphs were depicted on laterite, dolerite, sandstone, granite and basalt so that the engraved art remain long. Though dating of art work is difficult without carbon dating, the stone tools found near the site, the depiction of hunter-gatherers and animals, and the style and design define the period. Throughout India, from Ladakh to Kanyakumari, paintings and petroglyphs narrate the story of ancient humans, flora, and fauna. Almost the same style in depicting volvas, animals, humans, anthropomorphic figures, geometric designs, signs, and symbols are seen throughout western ghats of India. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, and Kerala are the States on Western Ghats where the enormous rock engravings are depicted on Laterite, dolerite, basalt, and granite. These petroglyphs are prompt and remarkable, showing the period of prehistory, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Protohistory to History. Many designs are continued in the form of warli paintings on tribe homes in villages and rangoli in front of houses.

In Maharashtra, the vulva signs are found in Kolhapur, Pune, Nagpur, Sangli, Satara, Ahmednagar, Nashik, and Raigad.

The Konkan coast of Maharashtra and Goa has a cluster of geoglyphs spread over 900 km. These are the most comprehensive, well-preserved, and artistically distinct Geoglyphs, evidencing a cultural legacy of 12000 years. More than 600 figures arranged in the clusters are depicted in southern Maharashtra in Kasheli, RundhyeTali, Devache Gothane, Barsu, Devi Hasol, Jambharun, Ukshi, and Kudopi. The largest cluster is at Barsu, Konkan, with more than 62 geoglyphs.

The scale of figurines

The artists from Goa and Konkan depict petroglyphs in totally different sizes. The rock engravings of Goa are small in scale compared to those of Ratnagiri & Sindhudurg. Goa's petroglyphs are from some inches to feet but Ratnagiri & Sindhudurg geoglyphs are from feet to some meters. The depictions are larger than life on the Konkan coast of Maharashtra.

We can see the marvelous art of these Ratnagiri geoglyphs. The artist depicted the animals larger than life size. Fish like Shark, Stingray are carved with double line.

A single human being at Devache Gothane on a large laterite plateau is mesmerising and astonishing figure. The compass deflects differently around 100 mts of this depiction. The reason behind these deflections is unknown and research on it is going on. Locally people called it Ravan.

The galloping deer depiction is so sharp that it clearly shows that the deer is running.

The huge, beautiful Rhinosirous which is not found in the region then also depiction of it is seen there is mystery. The Rhinosirous depiction art work shows that he is in running action.

Carved Elephant is also huge larger than life size figure. In Kasheli the Elephant geoglyphs is gigantic, it only can understand through drone. The other animals are depicted inside and surrounding the Elephant figure. In Barsu the extremely big depiction of a man holding two huge tigers is surprising. The depiction is well presenting the powerful man and unprogressive tiger like they are tamed by man. This figure may be showing some ritualistic sign or message to society.

Another rock art work on Rundethali is mysterious and couldn't decoded yet. The design shows some geometrical figure like circle enclosed by another four circles at corner and rectangle with man and some figures at center. It also seems like a board game or it can be reptile formed circle and rectangle with human in the center.

In Kerala, similar rock art is found at Ettukudukka in the Kannur district (Kumar and Varman 2019). Palakkad, Edakkal, Kollam, Idukki, and Malappuram districts are a few more sites of Rock engravings in Kerala. Edakkal Caves have unique designs of rock engravings that use the six basic elements - canoe, cross, triangle, square, circle, and volute. These petroglyphs date from the Lower Palaeolithic to early Historic. (Prehistoric Rock Art in Keralam P. Rajendran) human depiction with hair is used circle, cross, and rectangles.

In Karnataka, more than 250 rock art sites have been reported. The geographical locations of rock art zones are river basins, doabs, and central, coastal, and south Karnataka. In the Malaprabha River Basin—Badami, Hire Gudda, Thimmappa Gudda Aihole, Piklihal, Maski, Mallapura, and the Benakal—rock art shows life from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Badami-Chalukyan period. Many paintings and bruisings were found in the Raichur and Bellari regions. Hire Benakal of Tungbhadra River Valley was the first site, then Sharanabasappa Kolkara (2010) discovered 76 painted shelters from 17 rock art sites in the Hampi-Gangavati region. Another location of the Tungabhadra River Valley is the Seven Hill Ranges. The total number of figures is 4075, and 1500 cupules have been recorded in this region. In Central Karnataka, nearly 50 rock art sites are located. In Udupi districts, Avallaki Pare's in Kollur the female petroglyph is depicted with cup marks on the head as well as in the stomach, surrounded by eight other humans and a baby engraved. as per Murugeshi Turuvekere the Stone Age tools like arrowheads, blades, stone slings, scrapers, and other tools used in weapons were discovered, but there were no agricultural tools found, this indicates that hunter-gatherers made the petroglyphs. This could be an example of petroglyphs continuing from the Mesolithic period. Mostly the large bull depiction of art is mostly seen and it would be some ritual sign as in present day too there are rituals regarding to Bull.

Goa became known on the rock art map of India as petroglyphs were discovered in 1993 by Dr. P P Shirodkar, Directorate of Archives and Archaeology, Government of Goa, who carried out the explorations. By clearing the soil covering a laterite stone bed located at scenic environs, the hamlet of Pansaimal in Rivona village at Sanguem the Late Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic carvings pop up. The quarrying operation started on the right bank of the Kushavati river at about 5000s.mts., amidst the deep lush green serene jungle, laterite stone bed loaded with mesmerizing carvings of various types of animals, anthropomorphic figures, humans, compass along with some abstract art and signs. The discovery confirms the ancient man's habitation on the soil of Goa. The site is also called Usgalimol, the name of a locality on the left bank of the river. Apart from Pansaimal the prehistoric rock carvings sites in Goa are located at Bavlyanchemol, Pirla, Kazur, Mauxi, Pali, and Taleigao. Some microliths were discovered. The style and tool

of the etching show the approximate age of some of the engravings to be 8000-6000 years before the present. These bruisings have not been carried out all at once but were a canvas in progress on which symbols were etched at various periods from the Mesolithic to Medieval and is noted based on the study of similar symbols found elsewhere.

Petroglyphs at Pansaimal

Pansaimal is located in the village Rivona, taluka Sanguem, South Goa. The site of Rock Carvings is on the bank of the Kushavati River in a dense forest. It is about five kilometers from Rivona and measures about 500 square meters. Petroglyphs are dated as Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic, 8000 BCE to 6000 BCE. The Petroglyphs are carved on a hard laterite stone bed, animals like Zebu bulls, deer, buffaloes, wolves, fox, bison with wound marks, Gaur, Labyrinth, and human figures, which include the Mother Goddess, a delivered child along with the placenta, and a dancing figure of a female.

1. Zebu Bull – In all prehistoric rock art, the Zebu Bull is mostly found. On this site, the Zebu bull is special, very unique; artist carved as an X-ray image showing its innards.
2. Deer carvings facing Bulls in a fight.
3. Labyrinth – This carving figure gives Pansaimal, Goa world recognition. The labyrinth has seven concentric circles with passage-like features that lead to the center. It is big and geometrically fine. so the researchers interpret it in many ways. Chakravyuha and astronomy are called by some. It is open to interpretation as this symbol is found in many other parts.
4. Peacock - The carving of the peacock is much finer than that of other figures. The lines depicted for peacocks are broad and curvy so this petroglyph is considered a comparatively later period. Peacock is the most significant part of Indian art and literature.
5. A human figure, Mother Goddess – The most eye-catching depiction at Pansaimal is a human figure. This life-size carving is of Mother Goddesses giving birth to a child. Near this figure, the carvings of the newly born Child and Placenta also added inquisitive interest to researchers.
6. Trident – The Trident-like figure is interesting. It is nothing but a trap that shows the animals were trapped by tridents.
7. Dancing Girl – A life-size carving of a dancing girl with her left hand on the thigh of the bent left leg. The right hand is kept in a horizontal position. This art shows another artform.
8. At Pirla village, Quepem, there is stone bruising on a large laterite plain, which is also called Baulechem Murom. Bavaleacheomol found four human figures, four deer, and one bull.
9. Hen – Carvings of a hen also added beauty and told the story of that period's hunter accompanying the bird-like Hen.
10. Cupules - The cup-like depression depicted may be from the lower Paleolithic Age. It needs to be studied further.
11. Compass Carvings - Compass carving, along with animals in each direction is unique engravings on the rock bed of Panasaimal.
12. Arow and wounded animal
13. Twenty-five carvings of animals are on that rock. Zebu bulls, antelope, deer, and ibexes are some promptly noticed. A Vulva, a symbol of the fertility cult, is depicted in the center of the rock. This rock shows the faunal diversity of that period.
14. In Sattari at Mauxi village, nine rock etchings/bruising were discovered. Basalt is the rock found at a seasonal tributary of the Velus River near the Ravalnath temple. Zoo morphs, cupules, a trident, and an engraving of a footprint were some carvings shown

on the rock. In those carvings, a Zebu Bull, two bulls facing each other as in a bullfight, a small bull within the body of a larger bull, and a linear elongated animal that resembles a deer are prominent.

15. While going up on the Pali waterfall at Pali Hill, Vargani, near Netravali at Sanguem, discovered a rock on which symbols of the Sun and Moon are carved. Local people call it Chand - Surya.
16. Mother Goddess
17. Mainly, the Mother Goddess was found at Curdi village at Sanguem on the bank of the Selaulim river, now, it is near Mhalsa temple at Verna. The female deity is carved in a flat laterite stone. The figure is eight feet long and estimated to be more than 2000 years old. It was shifted from Curdi to save it from being submerged within the waters of the Selaulim dam in 1988 by the Directorate of Archives, Archaeology, and Museum. The image is identified as Lajja Gauri in the form of Shiroyukt Korraivai, or Kotavi, the nude Mother Goddess, locally called Kalavant or Kalavati.

Conclusion

The artist of the prehistoric period was highly knowledgeable and keen. But there must be a team who executed the whole encyclopedia of that era in art form. One must be a visionary who gives a thought to the way of living of that era and environment and suggests to create in art form. Another person must be a great artist who can design it sharply while other was good in color creating knowledge. One way they provided a library loaded with information on the vast canvas of Rock.

Petroglyphs at Pansaimal

Faunal depiction of the Site –

Zebu Bull – In all prehistoric rock art, the Zebu Bull is mostly found. On this site, the Zebu bull is special, very unique; it is carved as an X-ray image showing its innards.

Deer – Deer carvings facing Bulls in a fight.

Labyrinth – This carving figure gives Pansaimal, Goa world recognition. The labyrinth has seven concentric circles with passage-like features that lead to the center. It is big and geometrically fine. so, the researchers interpret it in many ways. Chakravyuha and astronomy are called by some. It is open to interpretation as this symbol is found in many other parts.

It shows astronomy, The labyrinth is a universal symbol in Rock art found outside India. The photograph of Star Trail from the Go Pro, Hero 11(camera) shows the same design as the labyrinth.

Peacock - The carving of the peacock is much finer than that of other figures. The lines depicted for peacocks are broad and curvy so this petroglyph is considered a comparatively later period. Peacock is the most significant part of Indian art and literature.

A human figure, Mother Goddess – The most eye-catching depiction at Pansaimal is a human figure. This life-size carving is of Mother Goddesses giving birth to a child. Near this figure, the carvings of the newly born Child and Placenta also added inquisitive interest to researchers.

Trident – The Trident-like figure is interesting. It is nothing but a trap that shows the animals were trapped by tridents.

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Hen – Beautiful carvings of a hen also added beauty and told the story of that period's hunter accompanying the bird-like Hen.

Cupules - The cup-like depression depicted may be from the lower Paleolithic Age. It needs to be studied further.

Compass Carvings - Compass carving, along with animals in each direction is unique engravings on the rock bed of Panasaimal.

Arow and wounded animal

Footprints - Several footprints, small to large size, were depicted.

Stone Carvings at Kazur

In the village of Quepem at Kazur, the quadrangular granite rock lies near a Paik temple in a beautiful large paddy field. The rock is about 1.25 meters in length and breadth. The local people call it Dudhanfatar. Twenty-five carvings of animals are on that rock. Zebu bulls, antelope, deer, and ibexes are some promptly noticed. A Vulva, a symbol of the fertility cult, is depicted in the center of the rock. This rock shows the faunal diversity of that period.

Animals and Vulva depiction at center

Stone Etchings/Bruising at Mauxi

In Sattari at Mauxi village, nine rock etchings/bruising were discovered. Basalt is the rock found at a seasonal tributary of the Velus River near the Ravalnath temple. Zoo morphs, cupules, a trident, and an engraving of a footprint were some carvings shown on the rock. In those carvings, a Zebu Bull, two bulls facing each other as in a bullfight, a small bull within the body of a larger bull, and a linear elongated animal that resembles a deer are prominent.

Bull Animal figure Bullfight

Stone Bruising at Pirla

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Rock Art At Pali

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Kerala petroglyphs -
Eddakle cave

Pallakad

Karnataka petroglyphs –
Kollur, Udupi –

Pavgad

Sanganakallu Archaeological Museum - Frontline The Hindu

Method -

The present author visited Goa and Ratnagiri, clicked photos, researched, and analyzed. On the site, the water is poured on carving outlines of figures so that they are clear and prompt. A comparative study has been done.

Acknowledgment -

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An Overview of Female Reproduction as Reflected in Ancient Indian Literature

Mugdha Chitale

Female Reproduction in the Indian Worldview

Ancient Indian texts viewed female reproduction as not just essential but elevated to the realm of the sacred. In ancient Indian culture, the desire for healthy offspring and successful reproduction was expressed most often through the veneration of specific goddesses. Among these, Sinīvālī was particularly revered as a deity who facilitated effortless childbirth and was considered a sovereign figure within the Vedic cosmic order (Ṛgvēda 2.32.7). The Sanskrit term "स्त्री" (*strī*), as Monier Monier-Williams (1899, 1260) observes, is etymologically linked to childbearing. This signifies the relation of the idea of reproduction with the identity of a woman, and is in some manner indicative of her role in society. The *Manusmṛti* (9.36) highlights women as the very source of offspring, stating they were made to conceive. This clearly ties their reproductive ability directly to the survival and continuation of family lines (Yajñavalkya Smṛti 3.78). In the *Ṛgvēda* (10.85.45), the bride is celebrated as the embodiment of cosmic fertility. She is the focal point of prayers seeking divine blessing to ensure she is fertile and fortunate in bearing children. This ritual emphasis also highlights the sacred role of the bride as both a life-giver and a vital link in the continuation of family and cosmic order. She is described as a sacred "field" (*kṣetra*) in the *Manusmṛti* (9.33), where the divine seed is planted. As a mother, she gives birth to sons, sustains the heroic family lineage, and serves as the vital link between the power of Heaven and the substance of Earth. This representation elevates her role in reproduction to that of a cosmic creator, reinforcing the sacred nature of female fertility. By giving birth, women do a great service to their family lineage and bring grace to the home (Manusmṛti 9.26). This sacred status granted women a respected centrality within ancient Indian society.

The Integration of Marriage and Reproduction

In ancient Indian civilisation, marriage and reproduction were tightly linked, serving as dual pillars of social and spiritual order. The institution of marriage (vivāha samsthā) was framed as a sacred duty within the gṛhasthāśrama (householder stage). According to the *Atharvaveda* (9.34), only a married woman and a married man were to produce offspring. Only then was that offspring considered superior. If a woman or man was below a certain age to conceive, the quality of the fetus and the reproductive system was impaired (*Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya Śārīra* sthāna 1.8–9). Many rules were prescribed during this phase (*Atharvavēda* 14.1.21), including how to protect women and how to engage in sexual relations during or after menstruation. The girl was instructed to be mindful of the householder's dharma in her husband's house. All of these were mentioned under the topic of marriage. Thus, the relationship between marriage and procreation was described in detail (*Yajñavalkya Smṛtī* 3.80; *Atharvavēda* 14.1.21).

Special care appeared to have been taken to protect the bride (*Atharvavēda* 14.1.35–36), explicitly aimed at securing progeny and emphasising that reproduction was regarded as a moral obligation rather than a private matter. By institutionalising reproduction within marriage, ancient society granted it both social structure and spiritual purpose. Children born of such sanctioned unions were regarded as the continuation of righteous lineages. Thus, marriage served not merely as a personal commitment but as a communal and cosmic responsibility.

Ritual and Medical Frameworks

The ancient Indian ritual system reflected a holistic view of reproduction, combining spiritual, ethical, and physical preparation for motherhood. Reproductive saṃskāras, including Garbhādhāna (a ritual performed after menstruation to ensure full term pregnancy), Puṃsavana (a ritual in third month of pregnancy), and Sīmantonnayana (a hair parting ritual of women by her husband in the seventh month of pregnancy), and Sōṣyantikarma (a ritual during prenatal care for easy delivery) were carefully orchestrated rites blending mantras, dietetics, and communal participation. Such practices demonstrated a belief that reproduction demanded nurturing at every level: body, mind, and spirit.

It was believed that only a full ten-month gestation period would produce quality progeny. For this, adequate uterine strength was considered necessary (*Ṛgveda* 10.183.3; *Atharvavēda* 6.81.2, 1.18, 3.23.1–2). The purity of a woman's vagina, blood, and uterus was regarded as important for a quality pregnancy (*Caraka Saṃhitā* Śārīra sthāna 3.1). A prayer for a quality pregnancy in *Ṛgveda* 10.184 projected the spiritual dimension of reproduction, not merely the biological.

Ayurvedic texts such as the *Caraka Saṃhitā* prescribed stage-wise care. They outlined how to protect a pregnant woman (8.11, 33), how to care for her body during pregnancy and the consequences of neglect (8.30, 36), and which dietary foods to consume or avoid entirely (8.42–46). Remedies for pregnancy ailments and postnatal therapies were detailed to ensure uterine health and successful lactation (8.46–65). The guiding metaphor of the woman's body as *kṣetra* (field) for the man's *bīja* (seed) reinforced the emphasis on creating an optimal environment for healthy progeny, blending natural science with ethical purpose.

Reproduction as a Collective Responsibility

Beyond the individual woman, ancient Indian society treated reproduction as a shared responsibility. Texts detailed not only strī karma and strī dharma (women's duties) (Yajñavalkya Smṛtī 3.83; Manusmṛtī 9.28–29) but also gṛha dharma (household duties), ensuring that family and community provided emotional support, ritual engagement, and physical protection to expectant and new mothers.

Ceremonies such as Sīmantonnayana involved family and community members, reflecting societal investment in maternal welfare. Family members were asked to protect the bride and to speak gently and lovingly to her (Atharvavēda 14.1.35–36). Various men in the household offered her hospitality in the form of ornaments, clothes, and food (Yajñavalkya Smṛtī 3.82). For this reason, in both Manusmṛtī (9.3, 7, 11, 95) and Yajñavalkya Smṛtī (3.78, 85), duties are prescribed for men alongside those for women, ensuring a proper division of work.

This collective approach framed reproduction not as a private biological event but as a multidimensional institution demanding shared care and ethical commitment. It positioned reproduction at the intersection of individual health, family duty, and societal cohesion.

Relevance to Modern Reproductive Challenges

Today, modern reproductive systems face crises that mirror the fragmentation ancient frameworks sought to avoid. Rising fertility issues, stress during pregnancy, reproductive disorders, and the erosion of family support structures all highlight the limitations of a compartmentalised, medicalised model. Ancient Indian practices, emphasising bīja-kṣetra quality, prenatal saṃskāras, structured dietary regimens, and community rituals, offer valuable models for reconstructing a more holistic reproductive

healthcare system. By integrating these ancient principles, modern society can create reproductive care that is culturally sensitive, ethically grounded, and more attuned to women's complex needs.

Objections

However, there exist certain objections to the point of view in the historical context. Critics may argue that framing ancient Indian reproductive practices as models for today risks romanticising the past and ignoring historical complexities, such as rigid gender roles or caste exclusions. This objection is important, but does not negate the core value of the ancient frameworks. While some social hierarchies were embedded in these systems, the holistic integration of physical, emotional, and spiritual care remains instructive. Modern adaptation can critically extract these valuable principles while rejecting any discriminatory structures.

A second objection concerns the potential reinforcement of traditional gender roles, reducing women primarily to reproductive functions. Indeed, ancient texts often centred women's identity around motherhood. However, this framing was simultaneously accompanied by societal support mechanisms that modern models often lack. The task today is not to uncritically replicate ancient roles but to reclaim the holistic care structures: ritual, medical, and communal, while also making sure that women's autonomy and diverse identities are respected.

The objections highlight real risks but do not invalidate the broader insights offered by ancient Indian models. By distinguishing between the core holistic frameworks and the socio-historical limitations, modern society can adapt the former while discarding the latter. The sacred and communal framing of reproduction need not be tied to restrictive gender norms but can instead inspire systems of care that are inclusive, empowering, and culturally resonant. The challenge is to translate the integrative wisdom into models that serve today's diverse and evolving societies.

Conclusion

Ancient Indian literature presents a vision of female reproduction that is sacred, ethical, and deeply communal, markedly different from today's fragmented, medicalised models. Through ritual, medical science, and collective responsibility, ancient Indian society cultivated a reproductive culture that integrated physical health, spiritual meaning, and social care. While modern objections raise valid concerns about historical gender roles, the underlying holistic principles offer powerful lessons. By critically adapting these ancient frameworks, modern reproductive systems can address current crises more effectively, reconnecting women's health with cultural dignity, ethical mindfulness, and collective support. Embracing this integrative vision holds the promise of reshaping reproductive care into a model that honours women's full humanity, not just their biology, but their emotional, spiritual, and social dimensions as well.

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Lakhi or Brockage Coins: Errors in Ancient Indian Coins

Damle Ashok

Antiquity of Coinage - References in the ancient classical texts

1. Asṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini refers to a sūtra, explaining about minting of coins that are stamped (āhata) with symbols (rupa).
2. In Kauṭilya's Arthaśāshtra Chapter XIV, "The Duties of the State Goldsmith in the High Road," in Book II, dealing with fake and counterfeit coins was a serious offense, with punishments ranging from fines to death, depending on the severity of the crime and the location of the offense.
3. Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāshtra refers in a passage about Kutarupakaraka (coin counterfeiter) and a list object used in the making of the coins.
4. Krishnala – a measuring unit mentioned in Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa.
5. Raktika or Guñjā – also known as ratti.
6. Mānas – a term used for transactions in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
7. Śatamāna –reference in Shrouta sūtra of Kātyānana, in the chapter Rajasuya - Nirupanam, refers to Śatamāna thrice.
8. Pada – metallic piece of a metal with standard weight referred in Brihadaranyakopanishad.
9. Hiranya – pinda – metallic pieces used in transactions.
10. Nishka – mentioned in a hymn of Ṛgveda that king Bhavya gave ten horses and ten nishkas to Rishi Kakshivat.
11. Kārshāpana & Sana – minted coins mentioned in a sutra in Asṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini, referring to and explaining about minting of coins that are stamped (ahata) with symbols (rupa).
12. Reference to the names of Kārshāpana, Māshaka, Kākani etc in Angavijja, a Prakrit text of around 3rd - 4th CCE
13. Yājñavalkya Smṛti, a text of the Dharmashastra tradition, gives some references to different types crimes. One reference from Yājñavalkya Smṛti talks about the makers of the counterfeit coins (Kutakrita nanaka) and the examiners of the coins (nanaka-parikshi).
14. Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāshtra (c. 4th century BCE) listed objects commonly used in the manufacturing of coins. According to him, the metal used to be first melted in crucibles (musha) and purified with alkalis (kshara). It was then beaten into sheets on an anvil (adhikarni) with a hammer (mushtika), cut into pieces with clippers (sandanisa) and in the end, stamped with punches carrying certain symbols (bimba-tanka).

The types of the ancient coins

Punch Marked Coins

The punch-marked coins (PMC) were earliest coins in India, dating back to the 6th century BCE during the period of the Mahajanapadas and the rise of the Mauryan Empire. The term punch-marked was firstly used by James Prinsep and were made using silver and copper. They were relatively simple in their design and production but were widely used due to their practicality and ease of manufacture.

Shakya janapada

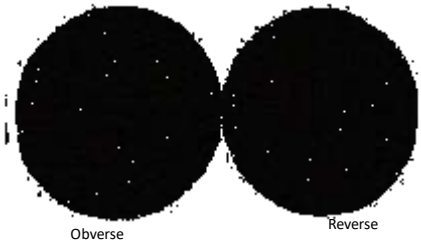
Mauryan Imperial

Repousse technique Coins

The coins of the **Repousse** technique were another type of coins, the word Repousse in French, means 'pushed up'. The Sharabhapuriya dynasty of Mahakosala (5th – 6th c. CE) of the modern Chhattisgarh region were early adopters of this technique, using it to issue gold coins.

Obverse Reverse

Sarabhapurias of Chattisgarh Gold, 525 - 550 CE.. picture courtesy Marudhar Arts



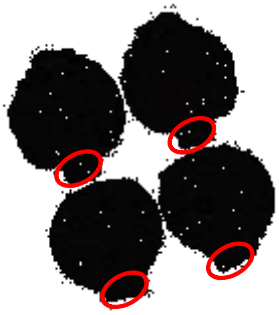
Obverse Reverse

Nala Dynasty of Pushkari, Stambharaja , Dakshin Kosala/ Dandakaranya , Gold, picture courtesy Oswal Antiquess

Kushan Empire. Huvishka AD 152-192. AV Large Gold Repoussé plaque... picture courtesy Oxus Numismatics

Cast copper coins,

Wherein Casting was used to make coins of copper and other cheaper metals. The practice, involving the use of molds, began somewhere around the 3rd Century BC, particularly during the Indo-Greek, Sunga, and Sātavahana periods. This type of coin-casting was regular up to the commencing of the Christian era with the Yaudheyas in particular favoring them. Cast coins often featured more detailed and intricate designs compared to punch-marked coins, including depictions of rulers, deities, and inscriptions. Casting as a process was quicker than punch- marking, as many coins could be produced at one time from a single mold.



Early Uninscribed Cast Copper Coins, EUCC.

Sunga Cast Copper coins

KaushambiUninscribed. picture courtesy Bombay Auctions

Die Struck Coins

The die struck coins used the most advanced technique in ancient Indian coinage, which became prominent during the Kushan, Gupta, and later periods.

Kunindas King Amoghabuti Silver Drachma.. picture courtesy NumisMall

Kanishka Kushan dynasty circa 125 CE .....personal collection

Skanda Gupta, silver Roman head profile.... personal collection

The Minting Process

Minting of the coins was possible due to the Metallurgical expertise prevalent then, with the die mould creation being a work of art depicting the culture prevalent then of each of the kingdoms / Mahajanapadas as the case may be. The Metals used in the coins were essentially Copper, bronze, copper alloys, Lead, Potin, Silver which was a rare resource and gold. The types of coins minted were the Punch Marked Coins, Early Uninscribed Copper Coins, die cast etc and they had set standards of the minting process: metals to be used, weights to be assigned, bankers mark etc. To understand the type of errors that may arise in the minting process, we must first understand the process itself.

Punch Marked Coins (6th Century BCE - 3rd Century BCE)

1. Metal Preparation: The metal, usually silver, was melted and purified. It was then cast into thin sheets or bars.
2. Cutting: These sheets or bars were cut into specific shapes, usually rectangular or square, but sometimes round or irregular.
3. Punching: Various symbols were then punched onto the coins using separate punches. Each punch bore a different symbol, representing administrative marks, dynastic emblems, religious symbols, or other motifs. The number and variety of symbols varied, with some coins having as many as five different punches.

Repousse Technique

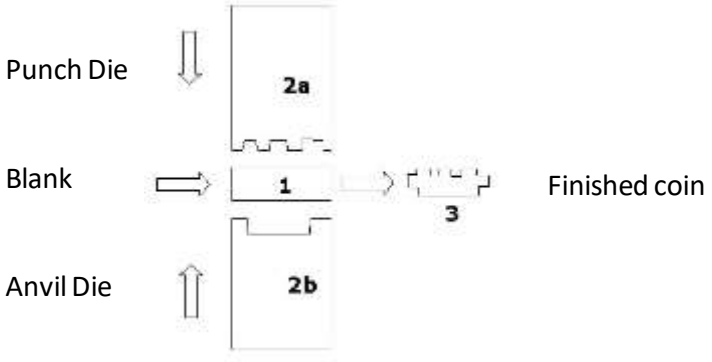
In this a coin's design is created in relief by hammering or pressing the metal from the reverse side, rather than striking it with a die.

Cast Coinage (3rd Century BCE - 1st Century CE):

1. Mold Preparation: Molds were made from clay or other suitable materials. These molds contained cavities in the shape of the desired coins.
2. Metal Pouring: Molten metal, typically copper, bronze, or silver, was poured into these molds.
3. Cooling and Finishing: Once cooled, the coins were removed from the molds, trimmed, and sometimes polished. The molds could be reused, allowing for the production of large quantities of coins.

Die-Struck Coinage (1st Century CE onwards):

1. Preparation of Blanks: Metal blanks were prepared by cutting or casting metal into discs. These blanks were heated to make them malleable.
2. Engraving Dies: Dies were engraved with intricate designs, symbols, and inscriptions. Typically, two dies were used—one for the obverse (front) and one for the reverse (back) of the coin (anvil and punch technique). On a diagram engraved on the anvil, the 'blank' was placed and driven in and either punched or hammered to take the impression. The anvil-die bore the symbols which are sunk into the die so that they would come out in relief on the coin. In the next stage, a diagram was engraved on the punch and used to type the face of the coin.
3. Striking: The metal blank was placed between the two dies, and the upper die was struck with a hammer. This process transferred the engraved designs onto both sides of the coin simultaneously.
4. Finishing: The struck coins were then inspected for quality, and any excess metal (flash) was trimmed off.



Droplet technique

1. A specific quantity of molten metal (usually silver or gold) was placed in a small crucible. The molten metal was then poured onto a hard surface, like a stone slab. As the metal cooled, it solidified into a round or elliptical shape, forming the coin blank.
2. It would be flat on bottom and slightly curved on top. On this blank the die would be struck

Types of Errors

Die defects: Errors that are engraved into the die during manufacturing
Planchet errors: Errors that occur when the coin is struck, such as when a foreign object is on top of the planchet
Die clash: When the coin dies come together without a planchet in between, causing an imprint of each die on the other
Brockage: When a previously-struck coin is used as a die:

Edge strike when a coin bounces during the striking process, causing it to be struck on the edge, resulting in bends, folds, or indentations
Double Strikes: Sometimes, a coin might be struck multiple times, resulting in a blurred or duplicated image
Off-Center Strikes: The coin might not be struck in the center of the blank, leading to an off-center image.
Rotation Errors: When the dies are not aligned to 12 'O' clock position of the coin and the coin is struck at an angle

Obverse and reverse same strikes,
Sunga, cast copper Kakani Picture courtesy Marudhar Arts

Double strike error on both obverse and reverse,
Kushan Vima Kadphises picture Courtesy Marudhar Arts

Satavahana potin shift error on reverse...personal collection

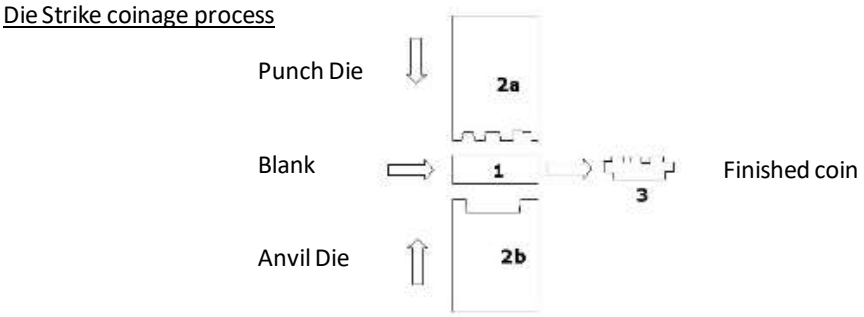
Satavahana Ujjain symbol, Reverse off centre striKe error

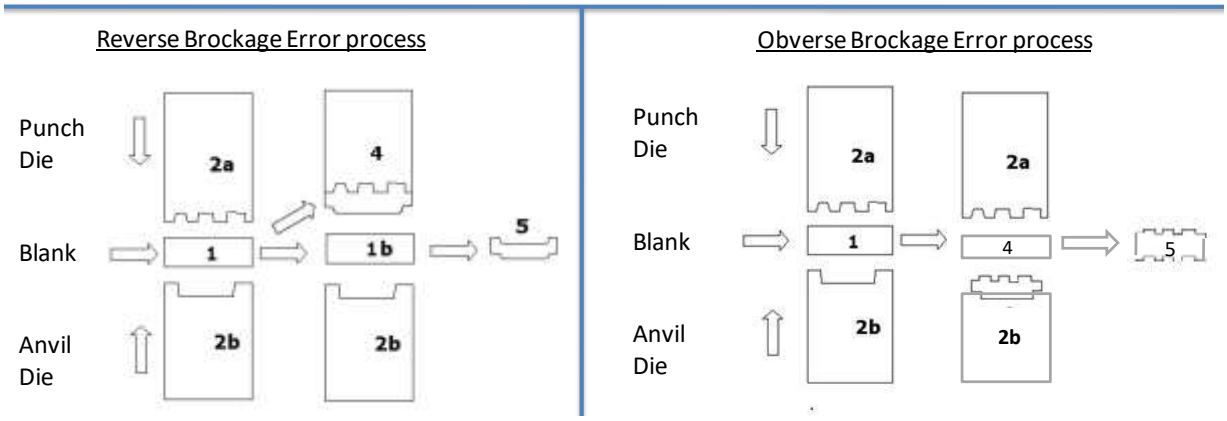
Fine double strike error on obverse and Reverse, Yajna Satakarni, portrait coin, silver.... picture curtesy Chaitanya Bhide

Western Kshatrapas Rudrasena III, imperfect flan or broken planchet error

Maharathis of Andhra Chulavaruni (100CE) die shift error, ...picture curtesy Marudhar Arts

Brockage or Lakhi coins

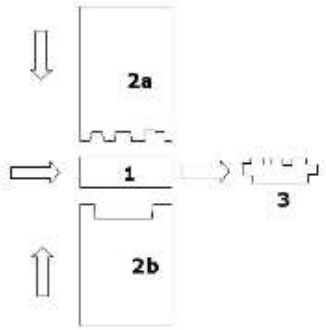




Brockage occurs when a mirror image of a coin is struck on a blank. After a struck coin fails to eject, a new blank is fed between the struck coin and the hammer die. The hammer die strikes the second blank leaving its image on one side while pressing the blank against the previously stuck coin, which sinks its image into the opposite side. Most brockages are off-center, but fully overlapping brockages are the most desirable.

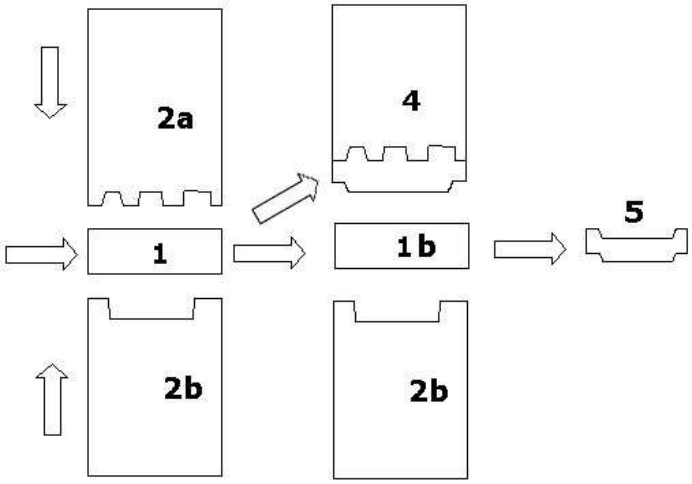
One side (most of the times the obverse) is normal, but the other side (usually the reverse) has an incuse (in negative) image of the other side, replacing its usual types and inscriptions.

In just a few words, a coin is produced by inserting a piece of metal, called blank (1) between two dies (2a, b). One of the dies is fixed (in a type of anvil setup), the other is mobile, held by a worker with tongues. With his other hand the worker (or another worker) applies a hammer blow to the mobile die and the engravings of the dies are transferred in positive to the blank resulting in a coin (3). Another blank is positioned and struck, and so on.

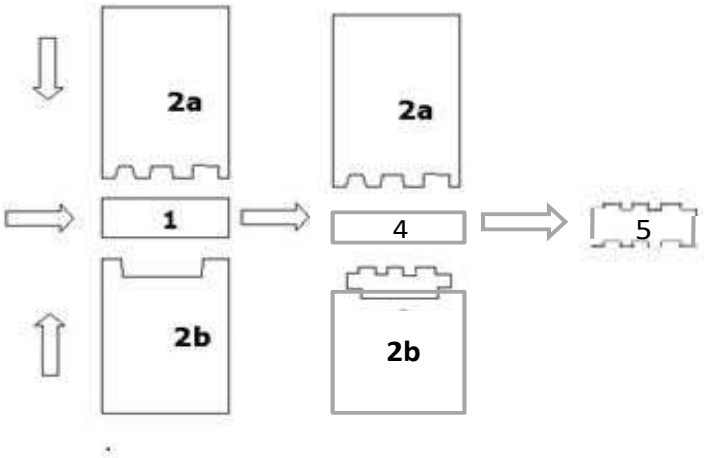


In some rare occasions, the coin can adhere to one of the dies and remain undetected for a while, because the process was carried out at a very fast pace. Following the drawing below, a new blank (1b) will be struck by the normal die (2b) and by the die + coin combo (4) resulting in a brockage (5).

This illustration is of an Reverse Brockage



but if the blank gets stuck to die 2B, then an obverse brockage is created.



Brockagecoin: Rudrasena II, Western Kshatrapa Obverse Error personal collection

Western Kshatrapas obverse errors.... pictures courtesy Amit Udeshi

Brockage or Lakhi coins…contd…Rare coins..

Gupta Coin, western type silver drachmma ...picture courtesy Amit Udeshi

Gupta Coin, western type silver drachmma ...picture courtesy Amit Udeshi

Sharva - Maitrakas of Vallabhi later issue Silver Dramma from Gujarat . ...picture courtesy Amit Udeshi

Satavahana cast bronze, Reverse brockage imprint of Ujjaini symbol, on the reverse, the Ujjaini symbol is partly stamped. ...picture courtesy Chaitanya Bhide

Sātavāhana with Taurine symbol coin with obverse brockage. ...picture courtesy Bhide Chaitanya

Some Obverse brockage images of ancient Greek and Roman coins...pictures courtesy Internet

Disposal of the error coins

1. Coins of Gold and silver with errors were melted and reused by default as the metal value was high.
2. Minor errors on coins with like die struck off the flan etc were ignored and kept in circulation
3. Coins with metals with lesser value were either melted en masse or kept in the circulation.
4. There may have been cases where the error coins may have been kept in circulation at a lower denomination viz Ardha Kārshāpana, in place of a Kārshāpana
5. Economic loss to the kingdom/percentage of error coins unknown due to lack of available information on the minting volumes etc.

Acknowlegdement and Picture credits

1) Udeshi Amit**:** Coin Collector & Dealer: for the access to the information and pictures

2) Bhide Chaitanya: Archaeologist and Sātavāhana coins expert, for his pictures on the Sātavāhana brockages

3) Picture Credits

1. Sarabhapurias of Chattisgarh, Gold Repousse coin, 525 - 550 CE...picture courtesy Marudhar Arts
2. Nala Dynasty of Pushkari, Stambharaja, Dakshin Kosala/ Dandakaranya, Gold, 1.54g, Repousse struck on thin planchet... picture courtesy Oswal Antiquess
3. Kushan Empire. Huvishka. AD 152-192. AV Large Gold Repoussé plaque... picture courtesy Oxus Numismatics
4. Kaushambi, Uninscribed.... picture courtesy Bombay Auctions
5. King Amoghabhuti (100 BC), Kunindas, silver drachm ... . picture courtesy NumisMall
6. Obverse and reverse same strikes, Sunga, cast copper Kakani...picture courtesy, Marudhar Arts
7. Double strike error on both obverse and reverse, Kushan, Vima Kadphises... picture courtesy Marudhar Arts
8. Fine double strike error on obverse and reverse, Yajna Satakarni, portrait coin, silver...picture courtesy Bhide Chaitanya
9. Gupta Coin, western type silver drachmma...picture courtesy Udeshi Amit
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11. Sātavāhana with Taurine symbol coin with obverse brockage. ...picture courtesy Bhide Chaitanya
12. Sātavāhana cast bronze, Reverse brockage imprint of Ujjaini symbol, on the reverse, the Ujjaini symbol is partly stamped. .... picture courtesy Bhide Chaitanya
13. Bhandarkar D.R - Lecture on Ancient Indian Numismatics, at the University of Calcutta, circa 1921
14. Bhide Chaitanya and Udeshi Amit: Sātavāhana Era: Coins Brockage / Error / Miss-strike: Documentation & Mintage,
15. Kauṭilya Arthaśāshtra - Chapter XIV, “The Duties of the State Goldsmith in the High Road,” in Book II,

Unpublished Inscription from Anji Nrusinha

Sachin Dixit

Discovery

This inscription is located in Anji Nrusinha, Taluka Ghatanji, District Yavatmal. Anji is known for its Narasiṃha temple. This Narasimha mūrti and temple are believed to date back to the 12th-13th centuries. In this ancient land, an ancient Kṛṣṇa idol was found in the house of Shri. Bhaskar Chopde. This Kṛṣṇa mūrti is made of basalt stone. On the mūrti's pedestal is an inscription covering about one foot of space.

Description of the mūrti

The mūrti measurements are as follows: length: 106.68 cm (42 inches), width: 57.15 cm (22.5 Inches), thickness-1.27 cm (5 Inches) and thickness at the base-25.4 cm (10 Inches). The mūrti is broken at the top and we were not able to find the fragments thereof. On the right side of the deity's face, we see Śiva with damru, triśūla and a citrus fruit. It is expected that on the right side, we could have had a representation of Viṣṇu. The top portion in such mūrtis usually has a representation of 10 avatars or just Brahma.

In the center is Kṛṣṇa in his Veṇugopāla form holding what should have been a flute. He is adorned with usual ornaments like mukuṭa,hāra,keyura, etc. On his four sides we spot śaṅkha, gadā, padma and cakra. By the sequence of the āyudhas in the deity's hands, it is a mūrti representing Pradyumna. At the level of his feet on the left side, we see Balarāma, then caurīdhāriṇī, Garuḍa with folded hands, an ascetic with his mast, a female devotee with folded hands. Alongside, we also see a cow being represented. It must be noted that the representation of Balarāma seems to be a joint representation along with Kṛṣṇa. Given the space available in the mūrti, is it unlikely that he is part of 10 avatars being depicted(?) On the right side, we find a seated Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa with Garuḍa. Below that,we see a female deity with a padma stick and a fruit in her hand. This is likely to be a representation of Śrīdevī accompanying the main deity. Next to her is a male figure holding a flower with a small stem and fruit in his hand. Just below is a bull is represented. The feet of the deity rests on the head of the nāga, who is overlaid on the peetha of the mūrti. This must be a representation of Kālīyā nāga. On both sides of the peetha, seated ascetics with folded hands are depicted. They are five in number. The center portion of the peetha has the inscriptions.

In terms of stylistic similarity, this mūrti is very close the the Kṛṣṇa mūrti at Mana village (Murtijapur Taluka, Akola District).

Inscription

The inscription is in the Sanskrit language and Devanāgari script. The letters of the inscription are clear, and the letter style matches other known Marathi/Sanskrit inscriptions from the 13th century. This inscription appears to be seven lines long. The last line is fragmented. The reading of the first six lines is provided here.

Text of the Inscription:

स्वस्ति स्त्री (श्री) संवतु ११६६
क्रोधन संवत्सरे जेष्ठ सुदि
एकादसि (शी) गुरौ चित्रा नक्षत्रे
वरीयानु(न) योगे स्त्री (श्री) गोपाला ।
प्रतिष्ठा कृता लक्ष्मीदेवेन अर्जु/अजुं(?)
ली ग्रामे स्त्री (श्री) गोपाल कृत एल/ण

Meaning and Discussion:

The inscription begins with auspicious words. It mentions that this idol was made in saṃvat 1166, in the saṃvatsara named Krodhana, on the eleventh day of the bright half of jyeṣṭha month, on a Thursday, under the Citrā nakṣatra, in the Variyāna Yoga, in the morning. The corresponding English date for this is May 19, 1244, Thursday, Morning. However, the alignment of Citrā nakṣatra and Variyāna Yoga corresponds to May 20th. If the order of importance is given to the year, month, and day, then May 19th should be considered the correct date for the inscription. Unlike many inscriptions from the Yādava period, which mention the śaka era, this inscription simply uses "saṃvat." This date does not align with other known saṃvats, and since it aligns with the śaka era, its dating is determined to be śaka 1166.

The text that follows states that Sri Gopāla Kṛṣṇa was installed in Anjuli village by some Lakshmideva. Some letters in the inscription and the double occurrence of the name "Gopāla" are not clear due to the fragmented last line. This section would typically contain the name of the person who commissioned the mūrti, the purpose of the mūrti, etc.

In 1244 AD, the region was under the rule of the Yādava of Devgiri, specifically under the reign of Siṃghaṇa II. Since the last line of the inscription is fragmented, it is unclear whether it contains the name of a donor or a king.

This mūrti had been lying in Shri. Chopde's house for many years. A brief news item about its discovery appeared in a local newspaper many years ago. Therefore, this should be considered the first scholarly reading of this inscription. This inscription adds significant value to the list of inscriptions from the yādava period.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Shri. Amol Chopde for allowing me to read the inscription in his house. Ganesh Bansod for the photos. I am also thankful to Shrinand Bapat, Ambarish Khare, and Ajinkya Umbarkar for verifying the details of the Panchang.

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2. Dev, S. B. (1984). Maharashtra va Gove shilalekh-tamraptanchi varnanatmak sandarbh suchi, Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Sanskriti Mandal, Mumbai.
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Board game Chaturanga & Navakankari carved at Different Monuments, a Comparative Study

Shreeya Dixit-Nachare

Introduction

Board games are played all over the world since hundreds of years. Same about India or Indian subcontinent. There are various evidences found in the Indus valley civilization sites also, like Mohenjo-Daro, Lothal, Brahmanabad[1] etc.

It indicates that there is a long tradition of playing board games up to the modern days. The board games must be played not only as a good time pass but also to enhance one's mind skills (conceptually). Now a days various ancient board games are outdated and forgotten because the traditions of playing these games are discontinued.

There are several textual references of board games in Sanskrit and Prakrit texts. These evidences are studied by some of the Indian & foreign scholars. Some of them have studied about a particular game (mainly Chaturanga) and some of them have studied the topic 'Board games' in general. Most of the scholars have studied mainly the textual references of board games and the various meanings of the words included in the play. But rarely, the observations are seen to be mentioned about the physical evidences of carved board games. Unfortunately, this aspect of our culture and tradition is neglected by previous scholars and researchers.

In any historical monument, floor is the most neglected part. Board games are observed to be carved at different Historical Monuments mostly on the floors.

[1] Dice play and origin of Chess in Sanskrit literature by C. Panduranga Bhatta, Motilal Banarasidass publication, chapter- Analysis of the game of dice, page no. 75.

There are variety of board games seen at various historical sites. But for this presentation two board games are selected among many, which are Chaturanga and Navakankari. This selection is due to the wide occurrence of these games. Also, for the interesting theories of their origins and textual references of these both.
Some basic information about these two games.

1. Chaturanga: This game is an old form of today's famous game Buddhibala or chess. Chaturanga used to play by four people; precisely by four kings. Each king have a minister, an elephant, a chariot and solders. Chaturanga is described in various ancient texts, in which it is described to play with the board having 64 or 144 or 196 squares. In some explanations the dice was used for this game. In the Chess, now a days no dice is required.

Later it is transformed to play by two people. And this form is known to be or seen to be played on the board having 64 squares only. Old Chaturanga and its later version Buddhibala both are of Indian Origin (and it is accepted by most of the scholars)[2] [3]Description of these both types is mentioned in the famous text Manasollasa which is written in 12th century[4].

The textual references of this game are very large in number.

Up till now in the survey, the board of 64 squares only is seen. These are carved at various historical monuments; caves and temples.
Summary of places and the number of boards.
Caves – Bhaje [1], Tulaja [1], Lenyadri [1], Ellora [2]
Temples – Bhairavnath temple Kikali, Satara [1], Lakshmi Narayan temple at Pedgaon [1].

This is to be noted that, at Ellora both the games are carved at Buddhist cave no 12 first floor, which is said to be used by Buddhist Acharya and some special people[5]. It also indicates that it may have been played by Bhikshunies.

Up till now documentation of 7 boards of Chaturanga is done.

2. Navakankari: This game used to play by two people. It has a set of 3 squares, small to large as seen in the figure.
Center of each side is connected by a line to the center of opposite side. As the name indicates it used to play with 9 seeds or small pebbles each. No dice was required for this game.

There is one theory proposed for this game that, it came with the Roman people some time at the starting or before CE. Detail research is to be done for this point. This game was famous as **Nine men's Morris** in that region. Navakankari name looks like a simple translation of Nine men's Morris or vice versa. In one Marathi text it is named as Fare-Mare[6].

As compared to Chaturanga the textual references for Navakankari are very less. But its occurrence is very wide.

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[2] Journal of Oriental Institute, Baroda 25TH year vo. 1985-86, article- A SURVEY OF SANSKRIT WORKS ON THE GAME OF CHESS by prof. Dr. S. Y. Wakankar, page no. 293- 303
[3] Athato Shastra Jigyasa, Prasad Prakashan, Mrs. Uma Bodas, an article by Dr. S. Y. Wakankar, page no. 170-176.
[4] Manasollasa – Translated by Neelakantha Phadake, first edition – 2014, Prakaran 5, page no. 553-559
[5] Maharashtratil Bauddha Leni by Dr. Suraj Pandit, Aparant, 2021, page no. 146
[6] Marathi khelanche pustak by Anant Babaji Deodhar, Vidya Prasarak Mandal - Thane, 1945, page no. 352-354

It is also observed to be carved at various places like caves, step wells and temples.

Summary of places & number of boards.

Caves- Tulaja [1], Nasik [1], Ellora [7], Takali Dhokeshwar [1]

Temples- Koppeshwar at Khidrapur [1], Bhairavnath at Kikali-Satara [3], Lakshmi Narayan at Pedgon [3], Mallikarjun at Pedgaon [2], Bhuleshwar [1], Paphar Mahadev at Lonar[2], Neelkantheshwar at Sindakhedraja [1]

Step well - Limbi Barav [2]

Up till now documentation of 25 boards of Navakankari is done.

Some key points about both the games:

As said earlier the textual references of Chaturanga are very large in number whereas its occurrence is very less. Opposite to this, textual references of Navakankari are very few but its occurrence is very wide.

Chaturanga needs hours or few days to finish a single game. As Navakanakari takes hardly 10-15 minutes to finish a single game.

Chaturanga needs some specific colored and shaped gaming pieces as a king, a minister, an elephant etc. Whereas Navakankari can be played with anything like seeds of different trees, Color stones etc.

So, it can be state that Chaturanga game must be played by kings or ministers or Acharya or intellectual people & those having more time for the play. Navakanakri must be famous in the common society. That is what the occurrence says.

But no change in the boards of these both games is seen. Starting from Bhaje cave which is said to be an oldest cave in the western Maharashtra[7] up to Ellora caves. And it is same at Bhairavnath temple, Lakshmi Narayan temples which are looking like built up in Yadav dynasty[8]. Same observation for Navakankari. From Tulaja cave to Nasik, Ellora and then up to Bhairavnath, Bhuleshwar, temples at Lonar and Mallikarjun. It is same.

Chaturanga at Tulaja cave

Navakankari at Nasik

[7] Maharashtrachya Itihasachi Sadhane – By Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao & Dr. Kalpana Rayrikar, page no. 207-8, Prachin Bharat Itihas Aani Sanskruti by Dr. G. B. Degalurkar, pagr no. 402, The cave temples of India (western region) by Dr. Furguson, page no. 22

[8] As we can see all the style is similar to the temples, known to be built in Yadav dynasty like Ambarnath, Khidrapur etc.

Indications

Presence of carved Boards of different games indicates various things that need to think on.

1. Interest of the people towards the play, entertainment and relaxation.
2. One can imagine what people in the past, did for their time pass.
3. The board games carved at different historical monuments were must be used, majorly by adults than by children. But some of the games must be famous and played by children, women and old people at their houses or at the common places used by these people.
4. The need of people to keep minds active is same for all the time.
5. Need of pure joy which can be obtained by playing games.

These carved board games are telling us the story of people who played the games on these boards at different times. Even though these people are unknown to us this is definite that some people, at some time must have played on these boards. There are no evidences that tells us the exact time for both, carving the boards and playing.

So even though this topic is small, it is worth to give enough or proper attention; remembering its contribution in personality development of people. The study of board games should be done for the sake of social, intellectual and mental health of the people in the past

Up till now survey is done for more than 450 caves, various temples, forts, step wells and documentation of more than 250 Boards of different games is done.

भारतीय परंपराओं मे "विनय" एक आचार संहिता।

वैशाली दुगड

प्रस्तावना

भारतीय परम्पराओ मे दो प्रकारकी वैचारिक धाराएं या धर्म देखने को मिलते है ।

- प्रवर्तकमार्गी
- निवर्तकमार्गी

प्रवर्तकमार्गी वो होते है जो स्वर्ग को अंतिम ध्येय समझते है व जन्म- मरण के चक्र को नित्य रखते है । उसी तरह वे अपनी हर एक कार्य मे ईश्वर पर अवलम्बित रहते है । धनप्राप्ति,पशुप्राप्ति या पुत्रप्राप्ति जैसे ऐहिक सुखो के लिए भगवान को प्रसन्न करने की कोशिश करते है । उदहारण के लिए वैदिक परंपरा यह प्रवर्तक मार्गी है ।

निवर्तक मार्गी या निर्ग्रंथी वो होते है जो स्वर्ग को अंतिम ध्येय न समझते हुए मोक्ष की संकल्पना मे विश्वास रखते है । मोक्ष याने जन्म -मरण के चक्र से छुटकारा पाना। उदहारण के लिए जैन व बौद्ध ये दो परम्पराये निवर्तक है।

भारतीय परंपराओं मे प्रमुखता से जैन,बौद्ध व वैदिक परंपरा मे विनय किस अर्थ से लिया गया है? व उसके संदर्भ मे आए हुए साहित्य का इस शोध पत्र द्वारा अभ्यास किया गया है।

विनय इस शब्द का अर्थ

- विनय यह शब्द नाम व विशेषण इन दोनों ही स्वरूपों मे उपयोग मे लाया जाता है।

उदाहरण विनयी राजा या विनय नाम का राजा।

- मराठी शब्दकोश मे विनय का अर्थ नम्रता,लीनता,सौजन्य,मृदुता,भलाई, गर्व रहित इस प्रकार दिया गया है।
- बौद्ध परम्परा अनुसार विनय का अर्थ है अनुशासन, आचार संहिता, जो भिक्षुओं और भिक्षुणियों को अपने दैनिक व्यक्तिगत और सामूहिक जीवन मे कैसे व्यवहार करना चाहिए, इसके लिए एक आचार संहिता है।
- जैन शब्दकोश मे विनय के लिए अधिक जानकारी इस तरह दी है, मोक्ष मार्ग मे विनय का प्रधान स्थान रहा है यह दो प्रकार का है निश्चय व व्यवहार। ज्ञान प्राप्ति मे गुरु विनय अत्यंत प्रधान है वैसे संघ मे साधु आर्य व आदियोंने एक दूसरे का विनय रखना बहुत जरूरी है।

संदर्भ

- इसमे जैन परंपरा के आगम ग्रंथ आचारांग सूत्र ,उत्तर अध्ययन सूत्र व दशवैकालीक सूत्र इनसे विनय संबंधी संदर्भ लिया गया है।
- वैसे ही बौद्ध धर्म के प्रसिद्ध त्रिपिटक मे से विनय पिटक को इसमे शामिल किया गया है।
- वैदिक परंपरा से मनुस्मृति का अभ्यास किया गया है।

विषय

बुद्ध की वाणी : त्रिपिटक

भ. बुद्ध ने अपने जीवन काल मे अपने भक्तों को जो उपदेश दिया था, त्रिपिटक उसी का संकलन है। बुद्ध की वाणी को त्रिपिटक कहा जाता है। बौद्ध परम्परा के समग्र विचार और समस्त विश्वासों का मूल त्रिपिटक है।पिटक तीन है-सुत्त पिटक, विनय पिटक और अभिधम्म पिटक। सुत्त पिटक मे बुद्ध के उपदेश हैं। विनय पिटक मे आचार है और अभिधम्म पिटक मे तत्त्व-विवेचन है।

बौद्ध परम्परा का साहित्य भी विशाल है, परन्तु पिटकों मे बौद्ध धर्म के विचारो का सम्पूर्ण सार आ जाता है। अतः बौद्ध विचारो का एवं विश्वासों का मूल केन्द्र त्रिपिटक है। बुद्ध ने अपना उपदेश भगवान् महावीर की तरह उस युग की जन-भाषा मे दिया था। बुद्ध ने जिस भाषा मे उपदेश दिया, उसको पाली कहते है। अतः पिटको की भाषा पाली भाषा है

विनय पिटक

विनय का अर्थ है अनुशासन (अनुशासन) आचार संहिता, जो पिटक मे भिक्षुओं और भिक्षुणियों को अपने दैनिक व्यक्तिगत और सामूहिक जीवन मे कैसे व्यवहार करना चाहिए, इसके लिए एक आचार संहिता है, और इन नियमों का पालन क्यों और कैसे करना है इसका इतिहास और विवरण है। ऐसे ग्रंथों का एक संग्रह है विनयपिटक ।

चूंकि बुद्ध के संघ मे सभी जातियों और पार्श्वभूमि के पुरुष और महिलाएं थीं, और उन सभी को सामुदायिक जीवन जीते हुए निर्वाण या अष्टांगिक मार्ग का पालन करना था, इसिलिये बुद्ध को उन्हे स्वीकार करने से पहले सभी प्रश्नों या समस्याओं पर विचार किया और नियम बनाये।

जैन तीर्थंकर पार्श्वनाथ ने एक मजबूत आधार पर श्रावक, श्राविका, भिक्षु, भिक्षुणियों से मिलकर एक संगठन की स्थापना की थी। लेकिन पार्श्वकालीन 'विनय' उपलब्ध नहीं है. इसिलिये भाषाई दृष्टि से अर्धमागधी 'विनय' से पुराना-ग्रंथ' बौद्धों का 'पाली विनय पिटक' है।

सूत्तविभंग

बताया गया है कि ऊपर दिए गए ग्रंथों मे 227 अपराध या नियम हैं ,वे क्यों किए गए,कब किए गए आदि स्पष्टीकरण सुत्तविभंग मे है, जो भिक्षुओं और भिक्षुणियों को (1) महाविभंग या भिक्षुविभंग और (2) भिक्षुणी-विभंग मे वर्गीकृत करता है। मुख्य नियमों की सूची को 'पाटिमोक्ख' कहा जाता है।

पाटिमोक्ख- प्रत्येक अपराध कथन की शुरुआत एक कहानी से होती है। इसे 'बात' कहा जाता है. वे सबसे पहले उस व्यक्ति का नाम बताते हैं जिसने अपराध किया है। पहली बार अपराध करने वाले इस भिक्षु के बारे मे बुद्ध ने जो कथन घोषित किये उन्हे 'पंजति' (प्रज्ञप्ति) कहा जाता है। बाद मे बुद्ध ने अपने पहले के नियम मे संशोधन किया, उसे 'अनुपंजप्ति' कहा जाता है।

जो नियम इस प्रकार बनाया जाता है कि उसके प्रत्येक शब्द की व्याख्या हो सके, उसे 'विभंग' कहते हैं। इसके बाद इसके बारे मे संक्षिप्त उदाहरणों की एक छंदबद्ध सूची दी गई है। इसे 'विनित्वत्तु-उद्दन-गाथा' कहा जाता है। अंत मे 'विनीत भागाई' शीर्षक कहानी को उदाहरण के रूप मे रेखांकित करता है।

सूत्तविभंग का विभाजन दो भागों मे किया गया है, वह है पाराजिक व पाचित्तिय **पाराजिक** ऐसे दोष जो किसी साधु को स्थायी रूप से संघ से निकाल देते हैं, उन्हे 'पराजिक' कहा जाता है।यह महादोष साधु द्वारा ब्रह्मचर्य का उल्लंघन, चोरी या साधु द्वारा हत्या करना, या दैवीय शक्तियां रखने का दावा करना है।

पाचित्तिय -इस संघ विशेष या संज्ञा विशेष ऐसा भी कहा जाता है। इसमे भिक्षु ने अगर अपराध किया होगा तो उसे संघ से 6 दिन के लिए बाहर निकाला जाता है उन दिनों मे वह एकांतवास मे तपस्या करता है। देखते हैं पाचित्तिय अपराध कौन से है?

वासना वश होकर स्त्री स्पर्श करना,स्त्रियों से वार्तालाप करना ,आत्म स्तुति करके स्त्रियों को आकर्षित करना, प्रेमी युगलों की भेंट करवाना,भिक्षु बांधावों को पूछे बगैर खुद के लिए झोपड़ी बनवाना,संघ को विभाजित करना, दूसरे भिक्षुओं पर झूठे आरोप करना

खन्धक

खन्धक इसका मतलब है भाग। इसके दो भाग है **महावग्ग चुल्लवग्ग**।

महावग्ग - इसमे 10 खंदक है। भगवान गौतम बुद्ध को बोधी प्राप्त होने से तो संघ की स्थापना करणे तक का सारा इतिहास महावग्गइमे कहा गया है।

भगवान बुद्ध के पहले शिष्य तपस्सु व भल्लिक इनका नाम उल्लेख यहां पर हुआ है

उनके साथ के सह तपस्वियों को भगवान ने चार आर्य सत्य के रूप मे पहला धर्म प्रवचन दिया उसे ही धर्म चक्र प्रवर्तन ऐसे कहा जाता है।

इसमे ही उनके सर्वश्रेष्ठ शिष्यों का नाम उल्लेख हुआ है जैसे आनंद उप्पली इत्यादि

मगध के राजा बिंबिसार की संघ से जोड़ने की कथा भी इसी मे आई है।

चुल्लवग्ग - इसमे बौद्ध संघ मे प्रवेश मिलने के लिए आवश्यक वह दीक्षा विधि और धार्मिक विधि बतलाई गई है वैसे ही संगिक जीवन मे होने वाली गलतियों और उस पर के उपाय इनकी भी जानकारी मिलती है।

- इसी मे कहानी के स्वरूप मे अनाथपिंडिक की दीक्षा व उसने जेतवन का किया हुआ दान इसका भी संदर्भ मिलता है।
- भगवान बुद्ध ने स्त्रियों को संघ मे दिया हुआ प्रवेश वह उसके लिए बनाए हुए नियम यहां मिलते हैं।
- पहले दो संगितियों का वर्णन भी यहां आता है

परिवार

विनयपिटक का यह अंतिम भाग काफी बाद का है। इसमे 19 छोटे अध्याय हैं जिनमे वेद और वेदांग के अंत मे सूचकांक-परिशिष्ट जैसे संवाद, सूचियाँ, परिशिष्ट, अनुक्रमणिकाएँ शामिल हैं। इसकी रचना संभवतः बाद मे एक सिंहली भिक्षु ने की थी और इसे विनयपिटक मे शामिल किया गया था।डेविड्ड के अनुसार यह भाग प्राचीन भारतीय शिक्षा प्रणाली पर प्रकाश डालता है।

महावीर की वाणी:-आगम

तीर्थङ्कर की वाणी को जैन-परम्परा मे आगम कहते हैं। भगवान् महावीर के समग्र विचार और समस्त विश्वास तथा सम्पूर्ण आचारो का संग्रह जिसमे हो, उसको द्वादशांग वाणी कहते हैं। भगवान् ने अपना उपदेश उस युग की जन-भाषा मे दिया था। जिस भाषा मे महावीर ने अपने विश्वास, अपने विचार और अपने आचार पर प्रकाश डाला, उस भाषा को अर्द्ध-मागधी कहते हैं। अर्ध-मागधी को देव-वाणी भी कहते है। जैन-संस्कृति तथा जैन-परम्परा के मूल विचारो का और आचारो का मूल स्रोत आगम वाङ्मय है।

आगमों की संख्या

श्वेताम्बर मूर्तिपूजक परम्परा 11 अंग, 12 उपांग, 4 मूल सूत्र, 2 चूलिका सूत्र, 6 छेद, 10 प्रकीर्णक इस प्रकार 45 आगमों को प्रमाण मानती है। इनके अतिरिक्त नियुक्ति, भाष्य, चूर्णि और टीका-इन सबको भी प्रमाण मानती है, और आगम के समान ही इनमे भी श्रद्धा रखती है। दिगम्बर-परम्परा समस्त आगमों को अमान्य घोषित करती है। उसकी मान्यता के अनुसार सभी आगम लुप्त हो चुके हैं, अतः वह 45 आगम तथा निर्युक्ति, भाष्य, चूर्णि, और टीका किसी को भी प्रमाणभूत नहीं मानती।

जैन शब्दकोश[1] मे विनय के लिए अधिक जानकारी दी है।

जैन परंपरा के आगम ग्रंथ आचारांग सूत्र ,उत्तर अध्ययन सूत्र व दशवैकालीक सूत्र मे विनय।

आचारांग सूत्र

द्वादशांगी अंगो मे आचारांग का प्रथम स्थान है। आचारांग निर्युक्ति मे आचारांग को अंगों का सार कहा गया है।

अंगाणं किं सारो! आयारो । (गा. 16)

निर्युक्तिकार भद्रबाहु ने लिखा है कि तीर्थंकर भगवान् सर्वप्रथम आचारांग का और उसके पश्चात् शेष अंगों का प्रवर्तन करते हैं। आचारांग पर भद्रबाहु की निर्युक्ति जिनदासगणि की चूर्णि व शीलांकाचार्य की (876 ई) की वृत्ति भी है। प्रस्तुत आगम दो श्रुतस्कन्धों मे विभक्त है।

प्रथम श्रुतस्कन्ध मे 9 अध्ययन हैं, लेकिन महापरिज्ञा नामक सातवें अध्ययन के लुप्त हो जाने के कारणवर्तमान मे इसमे 8 अध्ययन तथा 44 उद्देशक हैं। द्वितीय श्रुतस्कन्ध चूलिका के नाम से प्रसिद्ध है, जो चार चूलिका व 16 अध्ययनों मे विभक्त है। प्रथम श्रुतस्कन्ध के अध्ययनों मे जीव-हिंसा का निषेध, कर्मबंधन से मुक्ति, परीषहों पर विजय, रत्नत्रय की महत्ता तथा तप व संयम द्वारा शुद्धात्मरूप की प्राप्ति का विवेचन किया गया है। आचारांग के नवें अध्ययन 'उपधान मे भगवान् महावीर की तपस्या व साधना का विस्तृत वर्णन हुआ है।

द्वितीय श्रुतस्कन्ध मे समणों के आचार का विवेचन है। चार चूलिकाओं मे विभक्त इस श्रुतस्कन्ध मे श्रमणों की आहार-चर्या, शय्या, चलने की प्रक्रिया, वस्त्र व पात्रग्रहण, ठहरने के स्थान आदि पर प्रकाश डाला गया है। आचारांग के अध्ययन से ही श्रमणधर्म का परिज्ञान होता है, अतः आचार-धर को प्रथम गणिस्थान कहा गया है।

आचारांग के द्वितीय श्रुत्तस्कन्ध के चार चूलिकाओं मे से प्रथम चूलिका के सात अध्ययन [2]हैं। इन अध्ययनों के नामों की योजना व उनके विषयों को ध्यान मे रखते हुए हि प्रतीत होता है। पिण्ड का अर्थ है आहार, शय्या का अर्थ है निवासस्थान, ईर्या का अर्थ है गमनागमन प्रवृत्ति, भाषाजात का अर्थ है भाषासमूह, अवग्रह का अर्थ है गमनागमन की स्थानमर्यादा ।

पिण्डेषणा अध्ययन मे ग्यारह उद्देशक है जिनमे बताया गया है कि श्रमण को अपनी साधना के अनुकूल संयम-पोषण के लिए आहार-पानी किस प्रकार प्राप्त करना चाहिए।

संयम-पोषक निवासस्थान की प्राप्ति के सम्बन्ध मे **शय्यैषणा** नामक द्वितीय अध्ययन मे सविस्तर विवेचन है। इसके तीन उद्देशक है।

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[1] मोक्ष मार्ग में विनय का प्रधान स्थान रहा है यह दो प्रकार का है निश्चय व व्यवहार। ज्ञान प्राप्ति में गुरु विनय अत्यंत प्रधान है वैसे संघ में साधु आर्य व आदियोंने एक दूसरे का विनय रखना बहुत जरूरी है।

[2] १. पिण्डैषणा, २. शय्यैषणा, ३. ईर्यैषणा, ४. भाषाजातैषणा, ५. वस्त्रैषणा,६. पात्रैषणा, ७. अवग्रहैषणा ।

ईर्येषणा अध्ययन मे कैसे चलना, किस प्रकार के मार्ग पर चलना आदि का विवेचन है। इसके भी तीन उद्देशक हैं।

भाषाजात अध्ययन मे श्रमण को किस प्रकार की भाषा बोलनी चाहिए, किसके साथ कैसे बोलना चाहिए आदि का निरूपण है। इसमे दो उद्देशक हैं।

वस्त्रैषणा अध्ययन मे वस्त्र किस प्रकार प्राप्त करना चाहिये इत्यादि का विवेचन है। इसमे भी दो उद्देशक है।

पात्रेषणा नामक अध्ययन मे पात्र के रखने व प्राप्त करने का विधान है। इसके भो दो उद्देशक है।

अवग्रहैषणा अध्ययन मे श्रमण को अपने लिए स्वीकार करने के मर्यादित स्थान को किस प्रकार प्राप्त करना चाहिए, यह बताया गया है। इसके भी दो उद्देशक है।

इस प्रकार प्रथम चूलिका के कुल मिलाकर पचीस उद्देशक है।

उत्तराध्ययन सूत्र

उत्तर अध्ययन जैन अर्थमागधी आगम साहित्य का सर्वाधिक महत्वपूर्ण आगम ग्रंथ माना जाता है इसे महावीर के अंतिम देशना के रूप मे स्वीकार किया गया है।

प्रस्तुत आगम मे 36 अध्ययन हैं-1. विनय, 2. परीषह, 3. चतुरंगीय, 4. असंस्कृत, 5. अकाम मरण, 6. क्षुल्लक निर्ग्रन्थीय, 7. औरभ्रीय, 8. कापिलीय, 9. नमिपवज्जा, 10. द्रुमपत्र, 11. बहुश्रुत, 12. हरि केशीय, 13. चित्त-संभूति, 14. इषुकारीय, 15. सभिक्षुक, 16. ब्रह्मचर्य-समाधि, 17. पाप-श्रमण, 18. संयतीय, 19. मृगापुत्रीय, 20. महानिर्ग्रन्थीय, 21. समुद्रपालीय, 22. रथनेमीय, 23. केशी गौतमीय, 24. प्रवचन-माता, 25. यज्ञीय, 26. समाचारी, 27. खलुंकीय, 28. मोक्ष मार्ग, 29. सम्यक्त्व पराक्रम, 30. तपोमार्ग, 31. चरण-विधि, 32. प्रमाद स्थान, 33. कर्म-प्रकृति, 34. लेश्या, 35. अनगार मार्ग, और 36. जीवाजीव-विभक्ति

विनयश्रुत अध्ययन

प्रस्तुत विनयश्रुत अध्ययन मे बताया गया है कि **विनयी**[3]का चित्त अहंकारशून्य होता है-सरल, निर्दोष, विनम्र और अनाग्रही होता है। अतः वह परम ज्ञान की उपलब्धि मे सक्षम होता है।

अविनयी[4] अहंकारी होता है, कठोर होता है, हिंसक होता है, विद्रोही होता है। आक्रामक और विध्वंसात्मक होता है। इस अहंता एवं कठोरता के कारण अविनीत अपने जीवन का सही दिशा मे निर्माण नहीं कर सकता है। उसकी शक्तिया बिखर जाती हैं। उसका व्यक्तित्व टूट जाता है. जीवन विकेन्द्रित हो जाता है। वह अपने जीवन मे कुछ भी अच्छा नहीं कर सकता।

वैसे ही बहुत सी उपमाएं देकर विनीत और अविनीत शिष्य के स्वभाव के बारे मे बोला गया है। जैसे कि अविनीत शिष्य को सड़े हुए कानों वाली कुत्तिया और सूअर वैसे ही आडियल घोड़ा कहां गया है जीसे बार-बार चाबुक की जरूरत होती है।

गुरु के सामने कैसे बैठना है ,उठना है, गुरु के बुलाने पर तुरंत उनकी सेवा मे उपस्थित रहना है यह बतलाने वाली भी बहुत सी गाथाएं है।

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[3] "आणानिद्देसकरे, गुरूणमुववायकारए। इंगियागारसंपन्ने, से 'विणीए' त्ति वुच्चई॥1.2॥

अर्थात् "जो गुरु की आज्ञा का पालन करता है, गुरु के सानिध्य में रहता है, गुरु के इंगित एवं आकार अर्थात संकेत और मनोभावों को जानता है, वह विनीत कहलाता है।"

[4] "आणाऽनिद्देसकरे, गुरूणमणुववायकारए। पडिणीए असंबुद्धे, 'अविणीए' त्ति वुच्चई॥1.3॥

अर्थात् "जो गुरु की आज्ञा का पालन नहीं करता है, गुरु के सान्निध्य में नहीं रहता है, गुरु के प्रतिकूल आचरण करता है, असंबुद्ध है-तत्त्वज्ञ नहीं है, वह 'अविनीत' कहलाता है।"

वैसे ही भिक्षु ने भिक्षा कैसे लेनी है,कब लेनी है, किससे लेनी है, कितनी लेनी है और कैसे खानी है यह भी शिष्यों को गाथाओं मे से सिखलाया गया है।

यह एक मनोवैज्ञानिक सत्य है कि अगर शिष्य अपने व्यवहार से गुरु को आश्वस्त नहीं कर सकता है, गुरु की दृष्टि मे यदि वह अप्रामाणिक अनैतिक और दुराचारी है, तो गुरु शिष्य को जो देना चाहते हैं, वे ठीक तरह दे नहीं सकेंगे। उक्त स्थिति मे शिष्य जो पाना चाहता है, वह नहीं पा सकेगा। इसलिए गुरु की मानसिक प्रसन्नता शिष्य के लिए ज्ञान-प्राप्ति की प्रथम शर्त है। गुरु के महत्व को ध्यान मे रखकर शिष्य को गुरु के प्रति अपने को सर्वात्मना समर्पण करना चाहिए।

इस प्रकार उत्तराध्ययन के प्रथम अध्ययन विनय श्रुत मे पूरी 48 गाथाओं मे भिक्षु के विनय धर्मका अनुक्रम से निरूपण किया है ।

दशवैकालिक

मूलआगमों मे दशवैकालिक का महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान है। इस सूत्र की रचना आचार्य शय्यंभवसूरि द्वारा अपने नवदीक्षित अल्प आयु वाले बेटे के लिए की गई थी। श्रमण जीवन के लिए अनिवार्य आचार से सम्बन्धि नियमों का इस ग्रन्थ मे सुन्दर संयोजन किया गया है। इसका उद्देश्य मुमुक्ष साधकों को अल्प समय मे ही आवश्यक ज्ञान प्रदान कर उन्हे आत्मकल्याण के मार्ग की साधना के पथ पर आगे बढ़ाना है। दशवैकालिक मे दस अध्ययन हैं, जिनमे श्रमण जीवन के आचार-गोचर सम्बन्धी नियमों का प्रतिपादन किया गया है।

प्रथम अध्ययन दूमपुष्पिका मे अहिंसा, तप व संयम युक्त धर्म को उत्कृष्ट मंगल रूप माना है धम्मो मंगलमुक्किट्ठं अहिंसा संजमो तवो ।

द्वितीय श्रामण्य अध्ययन मे रथनेमि व राजीमती के संवाद के माध्यम से कामना के निवारण के उपाय बताये गये हैं।

तृतीय अध्ययन क्षुल्लकाचार मे यह स्पष्ट किया गया है कि जिसकी धर्म मे धृति नहीं होती है, वह आचार व अनाचार मे भेद नहीं कर सकता है। इसमे 52 अनाचारो का उल्लेख हुआ है।

चतुर्थ अध्ययन मे षट्जीवनिकाय का वर्णन तथा उनकी रक्षा के लिए पाँच महाव्रतों के पालन व रात्रि भोजन के निषेध पर चिन्तन किया गया है।

पाँचवे पिण्डैषणा अध्ययन मे साधु के लिए भोजन आदि के ग्रहण व परिभोग की एषणा का सुन्दर वर्णन है।

छठे अध्ययन महाचार मे अनाचार के विविध पहलुओ पर विचार किया गया है, इसमे परिग्रह की सीमाओ का भी विवेचन है।

सातवे वाक्य-शुद्धि अध्ययन मे भाषा दोष को त्यागने तथा हित-मित और पथ्य भाषा बोलने की शिक्षा दी गई है।

आठवे अध्ययन आचारप्रणिधि मे श्रमण को इन्द्रियनिग्रह कर मन को एकाग्र करने का संदेश दिया गया है। क्रोध, मान, माया और लोभइन चारो कषाय के निग्रह का यह संदेश दृष्टव्य है ।

नवे अध्ययन [5]विनय समाधि मे विनय की विविध धाराओं का प्रतिपादन हुआ है।

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[5] मूलाओ खंधप्पभवो दुमस्स, खंधाओ पच्छा समुविंति साहा ।

साहप्पसाहा विरुहंति पत्ता, तओ सि पुप्फं च फलं रसो य ॥९.१॥

अर्थ - द्रुम अर्थात् वृक्ष के-मूल से, स्कन्ध (धड़) उत्पन्न होता है, इसके बाद, स्कन्ध से, शाखाएँ, उत्पन्न होती है, शाखाओं से प्रशाखाएँ (छोटी छोटी पत्ते डालियां) उत्पन्न होती है और उनसे, पत्ता निकलते हैं, इसके बाद, वृक्ष के क्रमशः फूल और फल और रस उत्पन्न होता है ॥९.१॥

एवं धम्मस्स विणओ, मूलं परमो से मुक्खो । जेण किर्त्तिं सुयं सिग्धं, णिस्सेसं चाभिगच्छइ॥९.२॥

अर्थ - इसी प्रकार धर्म रूपी वृक्ष का मूल विनय है और उसका सर्वोत्तम फल मोक्ष है उसी विनय रुपी मूल द्वारा विनयवान शिष्य इस लोक में कीर्ति को और श्रुतज्ञान को प्राप्त होता है और महापुरुष द्वारा की गई सलग अर्थात प्रशंसा को प्राप्त करता है तत्पश्चात क्रमशः अंत में नि:श्रेयस अर्थात मोक्ष को भी प्राप्त कर लेता है।

मनुस्मृति

ब्राह्मण आचार मे वर्णाश्रम धर्म को प्राधान्य है और श्रमण आचार मैं वैराग्य आचार का प्राधान्य है। मनुस्मृति के अनुसार सन्यासोंन्मुख प्राणी अपने सभी उत्तरदायित्व से निवृत होने पर ही संन्यास ले सकता है।

प्रथम **ब्रह्मचर्य आश्रम** मे ज्ञानार्जन करना चाहिए तत्पश्चात धरमपूर्वक निष्ठा और कर्माता से धार्जन करके **गृहस्थआश्रम** के नियमों का पालन करना चाहिए ,संतानों की उत्पत्ति करके पितृऋण से मुक्त होकर **वानप्रस्थ** मे यज्ञ आदि करने के बाद व्यक्ति संन्यास का अधिकारी होता है। ऋण शोधन[6] किए बिना मोक्षार्थी नर्क गामी होता है।

इस प्रकार आश्रम की अनिवार्यता स्वयं सिद्ध है। मनुस्मृतिकार ब्राह्मणों को ही संन्यास की आज्ञा देता है शेष वर्णो क्षत्रिय, वैश्य और शूद्र के कर्तव्य-पालन मे ही उनके मोक्ष की सिद्धि या पूर्णता मान लेता है। क्षत्रियों के लिए वानप्रस्थ का विधान हैं-वार्धक्य मे मुनिवृत्ति को जीवनादर्श माना गया है किन्तु इनके लिए रणक्षेत्र मे प्राणत्याग करना भी संन्यास-साधन के समतुल्य है। मनस्मृति का विधान है कि क्षत्रिय चाहे तो तृतीय आश्रम मे जाये या धर्मयुद्ध मे प्राणों का परित्याग करे ।' वैश्यों के लिए वानप्रस्थ और संन्यास की अनिवार्यता नहीं बतायी गई है और शूद्रों के लिए तो स्पष्ट कहा गया है कि सेवा ही उनके लिए संन्यास के समतुल्य फल-दायक है।शूद्र के लिए संन्यास व्यर्ज है, यह तपलीन शम्बूक शुद्र की वाल्मिकी रामायण मे आये हुए प्रसंग से पता चलता है। मनुस्मृति मे बार-बार सभी आश्रमों मे जाने का उल्लेख इस गाथा से मिलता है

अनधीत्य द्विजो वेदाननुत्पाद्य तथा सुतान् । अनिष्ट्वा चैव यज्ञैश्च मोक्षमिच्छन्व्रजत्यधः ॥

अर्थात् जो वेदों को न पढकर तथा पुत्रों की उत्पत्ति और यज्ञों का अनुष्ठान न कर (अथवा ऋषिऋण, पितृऋण, और देवऋण से उत्तीर्ण हुए बिना) संन्यास धारण करनेकी इच्छा करता है वह नीच नरक गति को प्राप्त होता है।

मनुस्मृति के अनुसार द्विजों के लिए तीनों ऋणों के अपाकरण के बाद ही संन्यास का विधान है। जबकि जैन आगम ऐसा नहीं कहते । क्षत्रिय राजा नमि की प्रवज्या, दो युवा ब्राह्मणो का श्रमण बन जाना, हरिकेशी चाण्डाल की तपस्या आदि वर्णाश्रम धर्म की व्यवस्था के विपरीत हैं। जिसमे जब भी वैराग्य भाव हो वही श्रमण हो सकता है।

मनुस्मृति के षष्ठ अध्याय मे साधु-आचार का विस्तृत विवरण मिलता है। अपने पूर्व दायित्वों का पालन करने के लिए दण्ड और कमण्डलु साथ मे लेका मोक्षसिद्धि के लिए अकेले ही भ्रमण करने का विधान है। आचरण सम्बन्ची एक श्लोक प्रस्तुत है :-

दृष्टिपूतं न्यसेत्पादं वस्त्रपूतं जलं पिबेत् । सत्यपूतं वदेद्वाचं मनःपूतं समाचरेत् ॥

अर्थात् आंख से जमीन को देख कर पैर रखे, वस्त्र से छानकर जल पिये, सत्य वचन बोले और पवित्र मन से कार्य करे। कोई वाद-विवाद करे तो सहले, किसी का अपमान न करे । क्रोध से भरे हुए मनुष्य का जवाब क्रोधित होकर न दे, कोई निन्दा करे तो भद्र वचन ही कहे। सात द्वारों (पांच ज्ञानेन्द्रिय तथा मन और बुद्धि) से ग्रहण किये जाने वाले विषयों की चर्चा न करे । भिक्षा एक ही बार मांगनी चाहिए। भिक्षा न मिलने पर दुःख न करे और मिलने पर हर्ष न करे । प्राणयात्रारक्षार्थ भिक्षान्न से जीवन निर्वाह करे। दण्ड और कमण्डलु मे भी आसक्ति

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[6] ऋणानि त्रीण्यपाकृत्य मनो मोक्षे निवेशयेत ।
अनपाकृत्य मोक्ष तु सेवमानो व्रजत्यधः ॥

न रखें । अल्पाहम् और एकान्त निवास इन दो उपायों के विषयों द्वारा खींची जाने वाली इंद्रियों को वश मे करें इंद्रियों के नियंत्रण से और राग द्वेष के त्याग तथा प्राणियों के अहिंसा से सन्यासी मोक्ष पता है।

स्मृति की व्यवस्था मे यद्यपि संन्यास मोक्षप्रद है तथापि गृहस्थ की उपेक्षा कर यह सेवनीय नहीं है। गृहस्थ की प्रधानता सिद्ध करने के लिए स्मृतिकार ने कहा है कि वायु का आग्र प्राप्त कर के ही सभी आश्रमी (अन्य तीनों आश्रमी) जीते हैं। सभी आश्रमों मे वेद और स्मृति की विधि के अनुसार चलनेवाला गृहस्थ श्रेष्ठ कहा गया है क्योंकि वह अन्य आश्रमों की रक्षा करता हैं। जैसे सभी नदी-नद समुद्र मे हो आश्रय । पाते हैं। वैसे ही सभी आश्रमी गृहस्थाश्रम से ही सहारा पाते हैं। श्रमण व्यवस्था मे भी गार्हस्थ्य या श्रावक धर्म का निरूपण है किन्तु श्रावक की सिद्धि इसी मे है कि वह यथाशीघ्र साधु अनगार धर्म मे प्रविष्ट हो जायें। इसके लिए प्रतिमाओं का विधान है जिनके माध्यम से सीढ़ी दर सीढ़ी चढ़ता हुआ श्रावक मुनिधर्म की भूमिका मे पहुँच जाता है।

उपसंहार

- बहुत ही दूरदृष्टि से भगवान बुद्ध व भगवान महावीर ने अपने संघो मे दीक्षा लेकर प्रवेश करने वाले भिक्षु भिक्षुणी व श्रमण श्रमणीयो के लिए नियम बनाएं।
- सिर्फ नियम बनाए ही नहीं तो आचरण मे लाने के लिए ठोस कदम भी उठाए जिससे कोई भी निर्गन्थी अपने राह से भटके नहीं व अपना उद्देश्य पाने मे सफल रहे।
- इन तीन्हो परम्पराओ मे भगवान बुद्ध का विनय अधिक व्यवस्थित और स्पष्ट लगा ।
- भगवन महावीर ने विनय को उदाहरणों व उपमाओ से सहज समझने योग्य बनाया ।
- मनुस्मृति के अनुसार सन्यासोंन्मुख प्राणी अपने सभी उत्तरदायित्व से निवृत होने पर ही संन्यास ले सकता है। जबकि जैन व बौद्ध ऐसा नहीं कहते,जिसमे जब भी वैराग्य भाव हो वही श्रमण हो सकता है।
- इससे यही निष्पन्न होता हैं की तीनो परंपराओंका अंतिम धेय दीक्षार्थी होकर मोक्ष की प्राप्ति करनी हे ।
- इन तिन्ही परम्पराओ मे से एक माध्यम विचार निकाला जा सकता है की संसार निष्ठा और समर्पण से करे और साथ मे मुक्ति के मार्ग की भी खोज जारी रखे और यह सब विनय इस गुणधर्म से हासिल करना आसान है ।

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Life in India as Seen Through the Vedas

Mugdha Gadgil

The Vedas, as we all know are prominently religious texts and hence do not directly manifest the daily ordinary life of the Vedic Indians, except for the noteworthy descriptions from the AV. Hence, the paper presents the profane life of the Vedic humans revealed through the religious references.

Further, this paper includes references starting from the Ṛgveda (RV) up to the *Vedāṅga*-texts because the Vedic era stretches for thousands of years, approximately 2 and a half millennia during which the entire Vedic literature came into existence.

While thinking about the life in India reflected in the Vedic texts, multiple facets of it appear in front of us.

So let us review salient aspects of the life of Vedic Indians.

Religion and Philosophy

The Vedas are sacred texts because their major focus is on the religion and philosophy. In this regard, we observe a pattern in the thoughts and actions of the Vedic people, as the Vedic society passed from the ancient phase towards the later and later phases. So, in the RV which is the oldest among the Vedic texts), gods like Agni-Indra-Varuṇa and many more were praised by eulogies. Further various Yajurveda *Saṃhitā*s established the primary method and scope of rituals. *Brāhmaṇa* portions from them and individual *Brāhmaṇa* texts widened the scope and delved more and more into performance of the *yajña*s. However, the *Āraṇyaka*s displayed a new tendency to look for the inner meaning of the rituals. The *Upaniṣad*s were totally dedicated to the speculations about the essence of everything around. So, the religious ideas began with praising multiple gods i.e. henotheism, as the next phase performing *yajña*s to please those deities and at the end transformed into monotheistic ideas to look upon these multiple deities as representation of the ultimate principle[1].

All these religious and spiritual thoughts were flourished because they had a favourable and fertile soil in the form of the Vedic society.

Therefore, now let us have a look at these profane aspects of Vedic India.

Social aspect –

Family is the smallest but the foundational unit of any society. So let us first have a look at the structure of Vedic family and related concepts.

Wedding –

The starting point of a family. Various Vedic texts describe the ritual of marriage and throw light on various angles of family life.

The Sūryā-vivāha-sūkta (10.85) from the RV depicts wedding of daughter of the sun-god and it is a divine wedding. Additionally, it throws light on the desire or thoughts of any groom when he is going to marry the bride. It is a very noble and beautiful relation[2] where the groom expresses his wish as follows- "I grasp your hand for good fortune, so that with me as your husband, you will reach old age…"

Vedic wedding ritual includes various rites and *saptapadī* (action by bride and groom to take seven steps together) is one of the most significant ones. The mantras from Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra (ĀGs 1.7.19) for this ritual too display a notion similar to the

[1] E.g., Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads

[2] gṛbhṇāmí te saubhagatvāya hástam máyā pátyā jaradaṣṭír yathāsaḥ … 36

above-said idea. In this rite, the groom makes the bride to take 7 steps – each one to achieve a new objective for a happy and prosperous married life. They include energy, wealth, nourishment, progeny and all these are almost similar to the RV mantras. However, the most noteworthy is the last mantra and that is '*Sakhā Saptapadī bhava*' and it means "May you become a friend with the seventh step". It means the wife shall be the friend of the husband. Both these examples show that the relationship is expected to be based on some specific principle of equality.

Against this background, it becomes evident to know the reality of the married life. One of the Atharvaveda (AVS) mantras attempts to respond to our query. It says, the couple expresses the wishes to see each other lovingly, to keep each other in their hearts and to have their thoughts also be together[3].

Ritualistic texts from the Yajurveda tradition too include such ideas reflected through the ritual actions.

E.g. Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa text[4] mentions the high respect shown to a wife regarding the sacrificial procedure. According to it, if a man doesn't have a wife, then he is devoid of the *yajña* – he is not going to have progeny.

At one place, Taittirīya Saṃhitā (TS 6.1.8.5) unambiguously states that a wife is the half of oneself (a man)[5].

Position of women

All these references underscore the position of a wife in the Vedic family and the husband was aware of it. However, when we closely observe it becomes very clear that this high position of wife was due to her ability to give birth to children, and especially sons. She was important because she was *jāyā* or *ābhūti* i.e. the one who gives birth to sons, and her husband as if is reborn after placing seed in her womb[6].

This leads us to the family structure in the Vedic India. It is necessary to mention here that; joint family was NOT the only system then. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (SB 3.2.1.11-13) and Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa (3.123) both indicate that the performer of the ritual (*yajamāna*), his wife and the children symbolically formed a triplet. These accounts do not refer to any symbolism to an extended family. references to the grand-father or grand-mother are seen mostly only in descriptions of *śrāddha* rituals.

However, monogamy too was not the only custom prevalent. Polygyny i.e. a man having many wives was also in vogue. This is evident from the RV (10.145.1) or the AVS (3.18.1) which are sapatnī-nāśana-sūktas, i.e. methods to get rid of a co-wive. We also come across a discarded wife (*parivṛkti*) of a king in the Rājasūya ritual[7]. She was discarded because she had no son.

Thus, having a son was essential.

However, a daughter too was not unwelcome.

E.g., *pāṇigrahaṇa* is one of the significant rites in the wedding. The ĀGs[8] prescribes holding the bride's hand by the groom in two separate ways and it believed that each will transform into separate outcomes. Holding her little finger will result into begetting a

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[3] akṣyàu nau mádhusaṃkāśe ánīkam nau samáñjanam.
antáḥ kr̥ṣṇuṣva mā́m hr̥dí mána ín nau sahā́sati 7.36.1

[4] áyajño vā́ eṣáḥ, yò 'patnī́kaḥ. ná prajā́ḥ prájāyeran 3.3.3.1

[5] átho ardhó vā́ eṣá ātmánaḥ. yát pátnī …

[6] taj jāyā jāyā bhavati yad asyāṃ jāyate punaḥ. ābhūtir eṣābhūtir bījam etan nidhīyate । Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 7.1.

[7] nairr̥táṃ carúṃ parivr̥ktyài gr̥hé… TS 1.7.3.4

[8] aṅgulīr eva strīkāmaḥ. romānte hastam sāṅguṣṭham ubhayakāmaḥ 1.7.4-5

daughter and holding the hand along with the thumb will result into begetting a son and daughter both.

But a daughter or a woman in general was not as privileged as a son. Examples of *brahmavādinī* Maitreyī (Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 4.5.1) or Gārgī *vācaknavī* (3.6.1) are often quoted to indicate equal position of women that to the men. However, certain prejudices about capabilities of the women existed in the society. One must know that the same text disregarded Yājñavalkya's 2nd wife Kātyāyanī by saying – '*strīprajñeva Kātyāyanī*' (being a woman Kātyāyanī's intellect is limited.)

So, we may say, when it comes to the status of women, it was a mixed bag. The wives were important in order to get the *yajñaphala* and sons, and so, sons were preferred to the daughters.

Relations within a family

A father had a cordial feeling towards the children[9].

Reverence to parents is also equally old. In the famous *pṛthivī-sūkta* from the AVS (12.1), the seer appeals the earth to place them in all her strength and then appropriately calls her as his mother and considers Parjanya, the rain-god as his father[10].

But how was the status of siblings in a Vedic family? AVS advises that brothers and sisters shall be affectionate[11]. But we also come across another angle. There are terms such as *didhiṣūpati* - husband of that younger sister who is married before her elder sister, *parivitta* - elder brother whose younger brother is married before him, *parivividāna* - younger brother who is married before the elder one[12].

These terms occur while referring to a particular sin assigned to younger siblings, of marrying before one's elder brother or elder sister. So, the eldest child enjoyed a certain privileged status. Even now, in the 21st century, sometimes we can partially correlate to this idea in the Indian society.

Occupations and Economic activities

We usually think of farming and animal husbandry as the main occupations of this era.

Kṛṣi or agriculture was very well established. There are kṛṣi-sūktas in the RV (4.57) and the AVS (3.17). Various activities are referred to -

SB (1.6.1.3) refers to activities with various terms such as *kṛṣantaḥ*, *vapantaḥ*, *lunantaḥ*, *mṛṇantaḥ* meaning ploughing, sowing, cutting and threshing respectively.

So, the terms such as *kīnāśa* or a farmer and *hastapa* (mahout), *aśvapa* (stable-keeper), *gopāla* (cowherd), *ajapāla-avipāla* (shepherds) are found in the Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā (VS)[13].

But it also refers to some skill-based occupations and a few could be named, such as – *hiraṇyakāra* (goldsmith), *vaṇik* (trader), *rathakāra* (chariot-maker), *takṣā* (carpenter), *iṣukāra-dhanuṣkāra-jyākāra* (experts preparing bows, arrows and strings respectively), *bhiṣak* (physician), *vīṇāvāda*, *śaṅkhadhma* (experts playing lute and conch respectively) etc. The list includes words used in feminine such as *rañjayitrī* (expert in dying the garments), *añjanakārī* (expert in making collyrium), and *kośakārī* (an expert weaving covers for the holder of bows.)

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[9] RV 1.1.9

[10] … mātā́ bhū́miḥ putró aháṃ pṛthivyā́ḥ parjányaḥ pitā́ …

[11] mā́ bhrā́tā bhrā́taraṃ dvikṣan mā́ svásāram utá svásā 3.30.3

[12] Commentaries by Bhaṭṭabhāskara and Mahīdhara on Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa 3.4.4.1 and VS 30.9 respectively.

[13] Chapter 30

We may include even the occupation of priests because gifts of various articles were given to them. Preparing metal / earthen / wooden vessels must be there because the ritual performances refer to varied shapes of vessels and spoons.

Trading too was fairly prevalent. AVS sūktas meant for the prosperity of merchants introduces many terms such as – *prapaṇa*, *vikraya*, *pratipaṇa* etc. Indra is invoked as a *vaṇik* that is a merchant. We come across certain references where goods or even medicinal herbs were bought by exchanging something valuable[14]. This mantra refers to dhana (wealth) and hence the Vedic people certainly earned and maintained wealth. We come across approximately 30 terms representing the wealth[15].

We are not sure whether the Vedic people used some currency or they had barter system as we don't find names of coins in the initial times except the term *niṣka*. However, based on the usages such as *niṣkakaṇṭha* and *niṣkagrīva* probably the term here denotes a golden ornament rather than a coin[16].

We witness that 'Taxation system' existed and the *Dharmasūtra* (DhS) texts contain rules regarding varied produces and services. These texts are dated around the end of the Vedic era. E.g., Gautama DhS handles the taxation topic at length. The term *balidāna* is used by him for the taxes. He recommends following scheme of taxation – farmers shall pay $1/10^{th}$ or $1/8^{th}$ / $1/6^{th}$ of their produce, there shall be $1/20^{th}$ duty on merchandise, $1/60^{th}$ on roots, fruits, flowers, medicine, honey, meat etc. And then the text says that all these taxes shall be paid to the king because he fulfils the duty of protection[17].

Recreation

Vedic texts prominently mention gambling with dice. The *akṣa-sūkta* (RV 10.34) is famous for its description of the pitiable status of a gambler. There are references of gambling in the assembly of a king during a ritual named Rājasūya [18]. Chariot-race was a part of Vājapeya ritual[19]. However, otherwise too we come across term *āji* for a race and *śardhya* for a competition [20]. Such references indicate that certain contests in general and horse-races in particular must be a known practice.

Legal structure and Political Administration -
Political administration –

King as an administrator - The term *rāṭ* or *rājā* appears frequently in the RV. Soma and Indra are known as kings. Varuṇa was revered as *samrāṭ* and *ṛtapā* because he was particularly strict about following *ṛ*ta. *Ṛta* is a very unique Vedic concept and it means the cosmic rules or moral code of conduct. This code was applicable to both the deities and humans. Varuṇa used to punish the humans who breached the moral or ethical regulations and thus protected the *Ṛta*. This is depicted in the *Saṃhitā*s.

A human king in the Vedic tradition seems to mirror Varuṇa and a state was managed by a king. His duties towards his people were popularly known as *rājadharma*.

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[14] suparṇasúvane giráu jātáṃ himávatas pári . dhánair abhí śrutvā́ yanti vidúr hí takmanā́śanam. AVS 5.4.2
[15] Nighaṇṭu 2.10
[16] … niṣkagrīvo bṛhadúktha ẹnā madhvā̱ na vā́jayuḥ RV 5.19.3 eṣá iṣā́ya māmahe śatáṃ niṣkā́n dáśa srájaḥ … AVS 20.127.3
[17] 10.24-35
[18] SB 5.4.4-23
[19] SB 5.1.5.1
[20] RV 1.116.2 and 1.119.5 respectively. We also witness related terms such as ājipati, ājikṛt etc. E.g. RV 8.54.6

We come across 2 terms, namely *sabhā* and *samiti* [21]. These may indicate 2 groups of learned people which helped the king to administer the judicial procedures. It is significant to observe that these two terms have retained nearly identical meanings in modern Indian languages, even in the present era.

Judicial System

The DhS texts document a well-established judicial system which points towards the supremacy of a king who was assisted by ministers and judges, importance of evidence, especially a witness, punishments etc.

E.g. Vasiṣṭha DhS[22] states that the judicial activities shall be undertaken by a king or minister. Another text namely, the Baudhāyana DhS (1.1.6-7) suggests that if the cultured people fail to solve a legal issue, then an assembly of minimum 10 members can reach the solution.

These texts use term *prāḍvivāka* as indicating a judge. Speaking the truth in front of a judge was the foremost duty among all. It is said that the witnesses should appear before the judge and must speak only truth in front him[23].

We find the following emphasis on types of evidences in the Vasiṣṭha DhS (16.10)

"Likhitaṃ sākṣiṇo bhuktiḥ pramāṇaṃ trividhaṃ smṛtam.
Dhanasvīkaraṇaṃ pūrvaṃ dhanī dhanamavāpnuyāditi."

So, there were written evidence, witness and possession. This also shows that written documentation of legal process was started in India in those times.

Debt and its repayment - The concept of debt or *ṛṇa* was very much known to the Vedic Indians. The concept of *pañca-mahā-yajñas* came into existence to repay the debts to the gods, to the ancestors and to the humans, prominently. The same can be seen under the repayment of debt as a part of legal structure[24]. We come across the ideas of interest of rate, types of the interest and also the situations, where sons are prohibited from repayment of the loan taken by the fathers.

So, we can certainly say that strong shoots of legal structure already existed in the Vedic India, on the basis of which later *dharmaśāstra* blossomed.

Division of property

We already witnessed the privileged status of eldest children. How was it then about the division of property? It appears that the eldest son was preferred the most. TS (2.5.2.6-8) has the oldest mention of Prajāpati preferring Indra, the eldest son to all others. More details are found in the DhS texts. These texts too recommend the biggest share of wealth as well as all the cows and the horses for the eldest. Āpastamba DhS is the only exception. It recommends that in case a man divides his property being alive then it shall be equal to all sons and if he does not have a son then he may alternatively give it to his daughter. Today when the daughter has legally become an heir, we have to remember Āpastamba's visionary idea.

History and Geography

It would not be appropriate to say that Vedic India was a nation according to the modern concept. There were multiple royal families ruling over separate kingdoms.

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[21] AVS 7.12.1

[22] … rājā mantrī vā sadaḥkāryāṇi kuryāt 16.1-3

[23] Sarvadharmebhyo garīyaḥ prāḍvivāke satyavacanaṃ satyavacanam. Gautama DhS 13. 27 and 31

[24] Gautama 12.29-36

We come across terms namely *pañca-jana* or *pañca-kṛṣṭi* denoting 5 important royal families or dynasties[25].

We find names of the families such as *yadu*, *turvaśu, druhyu* etc. in the older Vedic texts. E.g., '*yad indrāgnī yaduṣu turvaśeṣu yad druhyuṣv anuṣu pūruṣu sthaḥ …*' (RV 1.108.8)

Bharata is another glorious family, other than the above 5 families. The first documented war namely Dāśarājña war which was won by a king Sudās from this family. The above-mentioned ruling families are seen as the opponents of king Sudās in the Dāśarājña war[26].

Some more influential family titles found in the later epic Mahābhārata can be traced back to later Vedic texts. Eg. Kurus who are usually mentioned along with the Pañcālas[27]. The *Brāhmaṇa* texts also refer to the very famous Ikṣvāku family. King Hariścandra from this family is depicted as a man not fulfilling his promise given to deity Varuṇa in an account named *Śunaḥśepa-kathā*[28].

Another reference to this family is found with reference to another king namely Purukutsa[29].

We also come across the names such as Andhra, Śabara, Pulinda etc in the *Śunaḥśepa-kathā* and we realize that these were not considered equal by those who followed the Vedic lifestyle.

If we check for vital geographical references, many rivers, namely Sarasvatī, Śutudri, Vipāś, Paruṣṇī and mountains such as Himavat and Mūjavat, regions or people belonging to varied regions such as Mahāvṛṣa, Gandhāri, Bālhika, Magadha[30] etc are found in the *Saṃhitā* texts.

In the SB., we come across a river Sadānīrā and it is mentioned regarding the migration of people led by Videgha Māthava towards the regions of Videha and Kosala (1.4.1.14-17). This is the same community which became famous later due to a philosopher king Janaka (Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 3.8.2)

Art and Architecture

Dance and music are found in the Vedas in the following way -

Dancing – Terms *nṛta* / *nṛtu* mean a dancer.

Indra is called nṛta at many places.

'táva tyán náryaṃ nṛto 'pa índra prathamám pūrvyáṃ diví pravācyáṃ kṛtám…'[31]

Musical instruments

In a rite named Mahāvrata many musical instruments were played such as *dundubhi, bhūmi-dundubhi, vīṇā, kāṇḍavīṇā, nāḍītūṇavā, śatatantu-vāṇa*[32].

VS 30.19 and Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 4.3.10 refers to a conch too.

Housing

Following terms were used for man-made housing structures - *durya, duroṇa, dama, śālā, gṛha, vimita / prācīnavaṃśa*. We realize that bamboos and grass was used

[25] a̲smākaṁ dyu̲mnam adhi̲ pañca̍ kr̲ṣṭiṣū̲ccā sva l̥̄r ṇa śúśucīta du̲ṣṭaraṁ . RV 2.2.10

[26] Cf. RV 7.18;33 and 83

[27] Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 8.14

[28] Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 7.13-18

[29] eté eva pū́rve áhanī / viśvajídatirātrasténa ha purukutso daurgahéṇeja aikṣvāko rā́jā… SB 13.5.4.5

[30] AVS 5.22.8,9 and 14

[31] This manly deed of yours, o dancing Indra, the foremost work done by you, is to be proclaimed early in the day— that by the power of a god you let life flow forward by letting the waters flow. RV 2.22.4. Also see RV 8.24.12, RV 6.63.5 (Aśvinau) 1.92.4 (Uṣas).

[32] Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā 34.5

to build these structures. Bricks were in vogue but we don't get any direct reference of its use in housing.

Material Culture

Metals- Various metals too are mentioned. Gold was always extremely auspicious; silver was not so due to some Vedic beliefs. Some other metals too are mentioned in the VS18.3. Following Sanskrit terms were used for the metals –

Hiraṇya	Gold
Ayas	Bronze
śyāma (kāḻasara)	Iron
Loha (lālasara)	Copper
Sīsa	Lead
Trapu	Tin
Rajata	Silver

Food and beverages

A variety of food is seen in the Vedic texts. It includes, barley, rice, wheat, sesame, millets, lentils, milk and multiple milk products. The यज्ञs were not possible without ghee and milk.

RV refers to milk and ghee along with *Yava* or barely. AV adds *Vrīhi*, *Tila* and *Māṣa* to this list. Texts from the next layer mentions *Godhūma* (wheat) and those which are called millets today.

"vrīháyaś ca me yávāś ca me mā́ṣāś ca me tílāś ca me mudrā́ś ca me khálvāś ca me priyáṅgavaś ca mé ṇavaś ca me śyāmā́kāś ca me nīvā́rāś ca me godhū́māś ca me masū́rāś ca me yajñéna kalpantām." [33]

We also witness offering materials namely *puroḍāśa*, *caru*, *yavāgu*, *apūpa*, *āmikṣā*, *karambha* which were made from these grains and milk products.

Soma-rasa was a famous and most coveted liquid offering material. There were other drinks such as *Madhu* (honey), *Surā* (alcohol), *Pānīya* (water) etc. These beverages were indeed used in the rituals, but they were also consumed by ordinary people. Though *Surā* was otherwise mostly disapproved, it was an offering material in some rites[34] and it was certainly a part of life in Vedic India. *Dadhimantha* (beverage obtained from churning curd) or *madhumantha* (beverage obtained from churning honey) too are mentioned[35].

Many trees namely *Palāśa*, *Khadira*, *Bilva*, *Rauhitaka, Udumbara*[36] and grasses such as *Muñja*, *Śaṇa*, *Śara* etc are mentioned as a part of ritual requirements[37].

Cloth and Clothing

Usually, descriptions of clothing of a performer of Soma-yajña or a bride are found. So wool is the mostly mentioned material. Their colours such as red or yellow are mentioned. However, we come across terms for horizontal and vertical threads of such woven garment or even their reasoning behind why does only humans wear clothes and

[33] VS18.2, TS 4.7.4.2, Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā 18.9
[34] Description of Sautrāmaṇī ritual SB 12.7.3.8
[35] Āpastamba Śrautasūtra 6.31.5
[36] Āpastamba Śrautasūtra 7.1.15
[37] ĀGs 1.19.8

none else (SB 3.1.2). Skins of various types of deer such as *Kṛṣṇa*, *Ruru*, *Eṇa* etc was also worn by a Vedic student or a performer[38].

In this manner, Vedic literature goes beyond the religious sphere of mantras and rituals to reflect on broader aspects of life. It offers insights into the domestic, social, economic, and material conditions that shaped the rich and multifaceted lives of the Vedic people.

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[38] ĀGs 1.19.9 and 11

Reflection of Dharma and Culture in Adi Sankara Vivekachoodamani

K. Mahadevan Menon

Introduction

Vivekachoodamani means the crest- jewel of Discrimination.

Vivekachoodamani is a "प्रकरण ग्रन्थ" in the Advaita Vedanta tradition. In- fact it is considered to be one of the finest texts on the primary introduction to Vedanta. This text, though categorised as a prakarna is the cream of all Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Though the text is directed for the benefit of a मुमुक्षु, we can, with fine understanding comb out the dharma aspect, right at the beginning of the text, without which the final result of liberation is certainly impossible.

Vivekachoodamani is a large undertaking of careful advice consisting of 581 slokas in various metres.

Adi Shankaracharya, the Author, is appropriately credited with the renaissance of the present-day Hindu way of life. In his short life of 32 years, he established four Maths in four corners of the country- Badri, Dwaraka, Puri and Sringeri and gave the authority to the protection of each of the Veda to his four primary students. His contribution to the religious and spiritual literature remains un-paralleled.

There are 4- पुरुषार्थ in the Hindu way of life. They are धर्म अर्थ काम मोक्ष. The word Dharma we will see in more detail later, Artha is wealth, Kama is fulfilment of our various desires and Moksha is Liberation. As already informed this text is for a person seeking liberation, but our focus is culling out Dharma in its essential nature. For this express purpose I have short listed verse-2 for our investigation. Verse-2, gives the bird's eye view of the entire spiritual road map of Sanatana Dharma. Before that, let us delve deeper into the word Dharma. in the Mahabharata- Yudhistira defines Dharma most appropriately, He says

धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां। महाजनो येन गताः स पन्थः[1] says that the essence of dharma is so vast, intense and deep that it is as if it's hidden in a cave meaning not easily known- hence the very conduct of a Maha purusha itself becomes the guiding principle of dharma.

Although it is very difficult to understand the complete import of the term, let us take a few etymological meanings of the term dharma.

1. धारणात धर्मः = That which supports entire universe is धर्मः-Supreme Consciousness/The Lord/Brahman.

2. ध्रियते इति धर्मः = That which is the essential property is धर्मः - That which makes it different from other things or that which differentiates it from other things.

3. उपोद्घात of शङ्करभाष्य on भगवद्गीता –

i] जगत: स्तिथि कारणम्= that which is the cause of existence of Universe - Brahman - स्तिथि includes सृष्टि & लय too.

ii] प्राणिनां साक्षाद् अब्युदय -निश्रेयस हेतु: यः सः धर्मः = that which the cause for people to live a fulfilled & happy life - Duty (धर्मः) gives अभ्युदय (fulfilment/happiness). - धर्मः also takes us to the higher realm of existence. निश्रेयस (Liberation) can be achieved through धर्मः

iii] That which is to be practiced. It is not just a concept/idea.

[1] युधिष्ठिर महाभारत

4. यत् विक्स्यते तत् (न्यायसूत्र) = That which expands us is धर्मः - That which helps us to develop our personality.
5. Values of Life - सत्यं, अहिंसा, ब्रह्मचर्य etc. – Righteousness.

• Why marriage? - You are forced to expand. You have to think about the wife, children, family, etc. - आश्रमाद् आश्रमं गच्छेत। Story of जाबाल-आरुणि (50 cows to 1000 - Through duty he got all knowledge from nature & within)

• धर्मः is that which expands an individual & society. We should think how each aspect of सनातन धर्मः will help individual & society evolve.

From the above it becomes clear as to the vastness of the employment of the term dharma. In fact, it is truly universal in its embrace.

With this idea in mind, let us now delve deeper into the verse 2 of Vivekachoodamani to reflect only on the dharma and culture aspect, rather than the Moksha aspect, which is the focus of the author of the text.

TEXT[2]

जन्तूनां नरजन्म दुर्लभमतः पुंस्त्वं ततो विप्रता तस्मात् वैदिक धर्ममार्ग परता विद्वत्त्वमस्मात्परम् ।
आत्मानात्मविवेचनं स्वनुभवो ब्रह्मात्मना संस्थितिः मुक्तिर्नो शतजन्मकोटिसुकृतैः पुण्यैर्विना लभ्यते ॥

jantUnAm narajanma durlabham atah pumstvam tato vipratA
tasmad vaidikadharmamArgaparatA vidvatvam asmAt param|
AtmAnAtmavivecanam svanubhavo brahmAtmanA samstitih
muktirno satajanmakotisu krtaih: punyairvinA labhyate||

Of all births, that as a human being is rare to obtain. rarer still is to be born as a male; rarer than that is to be born a ब्राह्मणः - More difficult than that is to be inclined towards the path of dharma declared by the Vedas. Successively more difficult than this are scholarships (in the revealed texts), discrimination between the आत्मन् and अनात्मन्, perfect experience following profound meditation, the state of being established in Brahman and lastly, मुक्ति or liberation. These cannot be obtained without merit acquired in hundreds of crores of lives.

जन्तूनां नरजन्म दुर्लभमतः - of all births, a birth as a human being is rare.

What determines a जन्म? what are the causes of a birth? What determines where an individual takes birth in which body?

In this matter it's the शास्त्र[3] which is the final authority

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम्।
भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु सन्यासिनां क्वचित्

It says that birth is decided by पुण्य पाप merits and demerits. Punya are results of meritorious deeds or actions and पाप are results of de-meritorious deeds or actions. Depending upon the प्रारब्ध कर्म - the results of Karma which have got fructified in the present life time. If from them the पुण्य Punya is more than the पाप Paap then the जीव gets a इष्ट योनि - daiva body, if the Paap is more than punya then the jiva gets appropriate अनिष्ट योनि - lower wombs and only when the Punya and paap are equal then alone the jiva gets a मिश्र योनि - human body. Punya Paap are themselves results of Dharma- adharma actions. Hence every existence in a body is depending upon dharma or otherwise.

Why a human body?

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[2] Vivekachoodamani- verse 2
[3] B.G. 18.12

It is only through a human existence can the highest of the PurushArtha मोक्ष is attained. Liberation is not possible for any other creature – higher or lower, neither for the devata-s and definitely not for a lower being. Hence a Human Birth is rare and very precious.

Four Types of living beings and their classifications

Even before Darwin gave the world the Theory of Evolution, Hindus divided the living beings into four types and seven types in two different classifications:

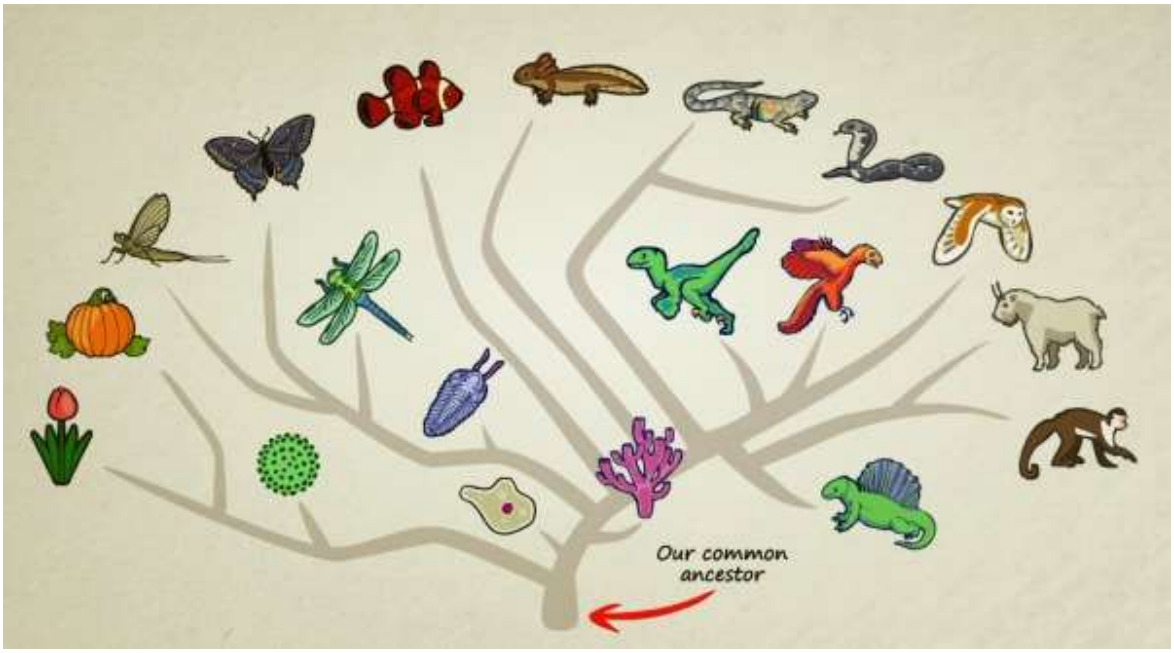
Type 1

1. Andajam: that which came from the eggs
2. Jarayutham: mammals
3. Udbhijam: that which comes out of seeds, roots
4. Swethajam: that which grows from sweat like liquids, i.e., germs etc

Type 2 Classification

1. Devas: beings in higher plane of existence
2. Human beings- earthly beings
3. Animals
4. Birds
5. Reptiles
6. Fishes and other marine animals
7. Plant kingdom

Tamil literature explains the same thing in a beautiful way. One of the five Tamil epics is Jeevaka Chintamani which gives the story of Udayana and Vasavadatta. The author Thiruththakka devar says human birth is rare. It is like one yoke floating in southern sea coming next to another yoke floating in northern sea and a pole is inserted into it. Human birth is rarer than this.



Avvai answers Lord Skanda's question

Another famous episode in Tamil is about the grand old lady of Tamil literature Avvaiyar meeting Lord Skanda. Skanda asked her several thought-provoking questions just to enjoy her beautiful Tamil. He asked her what is bigger, sweeter, crueler and rarer.

When she answered his question about rarer things in the world, she says human birth is rarer. Let us look at the beautiful Tamil poem in full:

"Rare is human birth, Vadivel (Skanda/Subramanya) Rarer is birth as a male with perfect limbs and with full use of all the senses. Rarer still is attainment of knowledge and wisdom, Rarer than this is the tendency to give and serve; and rarest of all is a life dedicated to spiritual enlightenment, for when one reaches the end the heavens will open to welcome that person—the perfect of all human beings".

I consider this as an echo of Adi Shankara and It is not uncommon to see the same thoughts in all saints of India whether they speak Tamil or Sanskrit. Great men think alike. We see the same thought in all the hymns of Thevaram, Thiruvasagam and Divya Prabandham.

From here we can deduce the rarity of a human existence amongst crores of species and various classifications. Hence जन्तूनां नरजन्म दुर्लभमतः – of all births, a birth as a human being is rare and very precious.

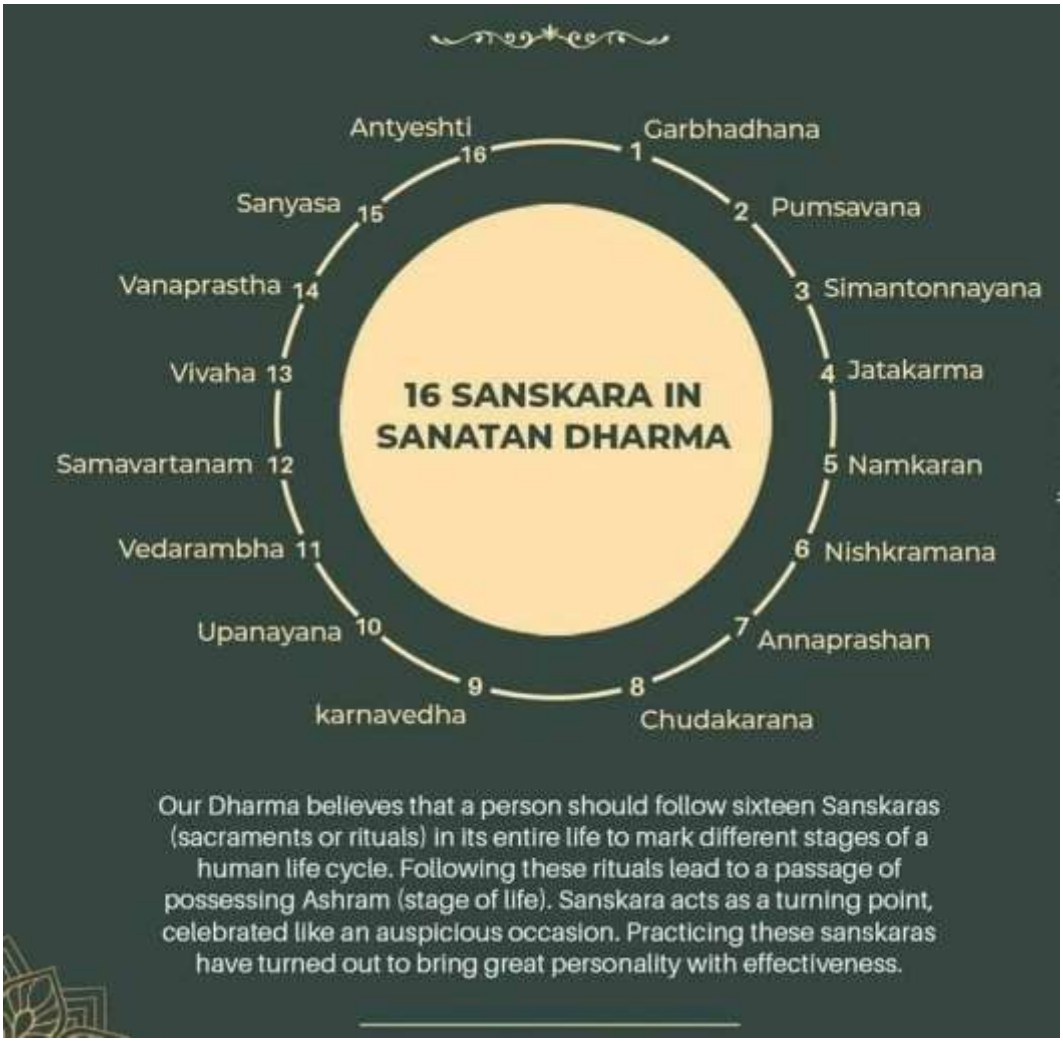
पुंस्त्वं – rarer than a human body is to get a healthy body. With sound limbs and most importantly healthy, sound and balanced mind. For all vedantic pursuit requires a healthy mind and intellect to pursue reflection and meditation. Herein all narrow and orthodox translations of only a male body are to be eschewed and the all-encompassing male and female virtues of both in a perfect balance are to be understood and accepted. पुंस्त्वं indicates a perfect balance of male virtues of strength, courage, detachment discrimination, cheer etc and the feminine virtues of steady determination, softness of heart, love, ability to bear pain etc such a person who has this balance of both masculine and feminine virtues are rarer still.

जन्मना जायते शूद्रः
संस्कारात् द्विज उच्यते
वेद पाटात् भवेतः विप्रः
ब्रह्म जानाति ब्राह्मणः[4]

All are born as shudra. But it's the samskAra which makes us as Dvija- twice born. Study of the veda make one Vipra (wise) and a BrAhmanA is one who knows Brahman.

What are samskara?

[4] Skanda Purana Vol. 18 Book VI, Nagar Kanda, Chapter 239, Verse 31-34.


16 SANSKARA IN SANATAN DHARMA
1 Garbhadhana
2 Pumsavana
3 Simantonnayana
4 Jatakarma
5 Namkaran
6 Nishkramana
7 Annaprashan
8 Chudakarana
9 karnavedha
10 Upanayana
11 Vedarambha
12 Samavartanam
13 Vivaha
14 Vanaprastha
15 Sanyasa
16 Antyeshti
Our Dharma believes that a person should follow sixteen Sanskaras (sacraments or rituals) in its entire life to mark different stages of a human life cycle. Following these rituals lead to a passage of possessing Ashram (stage of life). Sanskara acts as a turning point, celebrated like an auspicious occasion. Practicing these sanskaras have turned out to bring great personality with effectiveness.

There are 16 samskara in sanatana dharma. They are sequentially from birth to death: the first 4 samskaras pertain to before birth of the body, 11 samskaras pertain to the time the jiva lives in the body and the last is after the jivatma leaves the body.

1. Garbhadana- intent to have a child
2. Pumsavana- ritual to bring forth a strong baby
3. Simmantonayana- parting of the hair (mothers) upwards
4. Jatakarma- rite of birth of a child
5. Namakaran- naming ceremony
6. Nishkramana- rite of taking the baby out for the first time
7. Annaprashan- ritual of giving solid food for first time.
8. Chudakarana- baby's first hair cut
9. Karnavedha- ear piercing.
10. Upanayana- rite of thread ceremony
11. Vedaarambha- begin study of Veda
12. Samavartanam – Graduation ceremony
13. Vivaha- marriage
14. Vanaprastha- retirement ceremony
15. Sannyasa- renunciation
16. Antyeshti -funeral rites.

Samskara-s are rites or rituals done in accordance with the ordainment of the ShAstra. They are categorised under the नैम्मितिक कर्म – or rituals done on special occasions. When such are done then the individual follows the shastra injunctions – dharma and attains Punya.

विप्रता – rarer still is a person who has the sattvic qualities of संतोष contentment समाधान spirit of self-surrender शान्ति peace arising from right knowledge. This is a quality which has arisen over life times of Punya.

तस्मात् वैदिक धर्ममार्ग परता -having lived doing one's duty as per the injunctions of the veda, then.

The karma mimAmsaka-s hold that dharma by itself is the final means for the attainment of eternal bliss and that there is nothing else that is required. Sri Sankara indicates his dissent by using the word "mArga" in vaidika dharma mArga paratAt. The use of the word mArga shows that dharma cannot by itself, directly or immediately, give the bliss of moksha

Shankara[5] says "Two are the paths laid down in the Vedas. Dharma is said to be of two kinds, of the nature of प्रवृत्ति लक्षण धर्म (dharma towards or worldly activity) and निवृत्ति लक्षण धर्म dharma away from or withdrawal from the world)."

So now onwards the निवृत्ति लक्षण धर्म begins.

विद्वत्त्वं – getting a Guru. गुरु उपसदन

Only when the highest calling of the Self arises, that a Guru comes.

आत्मानात्मविवेचनं – discrimination between Atma and an-atma

स्वनुभवो – Self- realisation

ब्रह्मात्मना संस्थितिः – firm abidance in Brahman

मुक्तिर्नो शतजन्मकोटिसुकृतैः पुण्यैर्विना लभ्यते – liberation is not possible without a hundred crores of Punya gained.

śaṅkarā concludes this verse by asserting "hundred crores of Punya" is to be understood as something that is not attained easily. Liberation from संसार is a final culmination of all the PurushArtha.

[5] श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता शंकरभाष्य – उपोद्घात Gita press, Gorakhpur.

Study of Chāyānāṭaka (with special reference to Dūtāṅgada)

Kaumudi Kaledhonkar

Sanskrit Dramatic literature presents a rich tapestry of forms and genres which is evolving over centuries. Within this wide range of Sanskrit dramaturgy, the Chāyānāṭaka occupies a unique but less-encountered position. Looking at the literal meaning of the word Chāyānāṭaka, it can be accepted as 'shadow-play'. This form of drama is not mentioned in any dramaturgical texts that will inform about its characteristics[1]. However, evidence suggests that this art form has deep roots in Indian culture. Traditionally this drama-form is understood as an ancient form of storytelling, by using flat, articulated figures to craft the illusion of moving humans. In shadow theatre, figures are illuminated from behind a screen, producing an effect of moving characters. This technique is skillfully used to narrate tales from epics like Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, as well as various folktales[2]. Nīlakaṇṭha, a commentator on the Mahābhārata, describes "Rūpopajīvanam" as 'Jālamaṇḍapikā,' referring to performances where leather figures are manipulated behind a thin cloth, casting shadows on a screen. This description aligns with traditional shadow theatre practices, highlighting the historical presence of this art form in India[3]. The origins of shadow-play in India remain uncertain, with the earliest confirmed example being Meghaprabhācārya's Dharmābhyudaya. But this play is undated, making it difficult to establish a timeline for the emergence of shadow-theatre in Indian performing arts[4].

A significant work in this context is Subhaṭa's Dutāṅgada, which is explicitly labeled a Chāyānāṭaka, suggesting it was intended as a shadow-play[5]. The prologue of Dutāṅgada informs that, this Chāyānāṭaka was presented in the court of Cālukya king Tribhuvanapāladeva on the occasion of spring festival in the remembrance of Cālukya king Kumārapāla[6]. Due to this explicit reference, it is easier to determine the time period of Dutāṅgada. Subhaṭa has written this drama around 1243 AD[7] which was presented on the occasion of remembrance of restoration of Śiva temple by king Kumārapāla[8]. This play has two recensions[9]. The longer version which is available in the form of manuscript at India Office Library, is a mediator between drama and poetry whereas the shorter version comes closer to be considered as a shadow-play. It is published by Nirnaya-sagara press, Mumbai. For this particular research, the shorter version of Dutāṅgada is considered.

This play portrays Aṅgada's mission to Rāvaṇa's court to seek Sītā's release, to prevent the upcoming war. It is structured in four scenes, each advancing the narrative towards the impending war. The story is originally adapted from 41st chapter of Rāmāyaṇa's Yuddhakāṇḍa. The Nāndi of this drama is of type *āśīrvacana* which prays to lord Viśṇu's conch. After the prologue, the second scene is about Rāma ordering Aṅgada to visit Rāvaṇa as a messenger and warning him that if he does not return Sītā, he will face dreadful consequences. Third scene can be divided in two parts. In the first part, Mandodarī and Vibhīṣaṇa are requesting Rāvaṇa to release Sītā and detrain the

[1] History of classical Sanskrit literature (M. Krishnamachariar, 1937) P. 685.25
[2] NEHU Journal (Shadows speak) Vol. xiii.21.19
[3] History of classical Sanskrit literature (M. Krishnamachariar, 1937) P. 685.26
[4] The Sanskrit drama in its origin, development, theory and practice (A. B. Keith, 1924) P. 269.6
[5] History of Indian literature (M. Winternitz, 1927) P. 274.5
[6] Dutāṅgada P. 2.5
[7] History of Indian literature (M. Winternitz, 1927) P. 274.18
[8] History of Sanskrit literature (S. N. Dasgupta and S. K. De, 1947) P. 503.1
[9] History of classical Sanskrit literature (M. Krishnamachariar, 1937) P. 686.17

impending destruction of Rākṣasas. In the second part, Aṅgada visits Rāvaṇa and they have a verbal sparring. The mentionable part in this scene is that, Rāvaṇa brings Māyā-Sītā in his court who professes her allegiance to him in an attempt to deceive Aṅgada. But Aṅgada does not waver. Instead, he showcases his faith in Sītā. This part is not originally from Rāmāyaṇa and is sole creativity of Subhaṭa. Although a similar instance occurs in Rāmāyaṇa where Rāvaṇa shows fake head of Rāma to Sītā to deceive her[10]. The last scene states the defeat of Rākṣasas, Rāma's bravery and victory over Rāvaṇa as well as reunion of Rāma and Sītā. It is a one-act play. The prominent rasa in this drama is Vīra. The story is adapted from Rāmāyaṅa, hence it is a Prakhyāta kind of plot[11]. Subhaṭa has used chandas such as Vasantatilakā, upajāti, Anuṣṭubh, Śārdulavikridita, Āryā, Śikhariṇī that enrich the drama.

Characterizations in Dutāṅgada

There is total 17 characters in this drama viz. Sūtradhāra, Naṭī, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Aṅgada, Sugrīva, Rāvaṇa, Mandodarī, Vibhīṣaṇa, Prahasta, Mālyavān, Māyā-Sītā, Rākṣasī, Niśācara, Hemāṅgada, Citrāṅgada and Cāraṇa. But only the characters that help to evaluate socio-cultural aspects in this drama will be considered.

Rāma - In Dutāṅgada, Rāma's role as an ambassador underscores his embodiment of dharma (righteousness) and compassion. His warning to Rāvaṇa about the dire consequences of not returning Sītā unharmed[12] highlights his deep commitment to her well-being and his adherence to moral principles. Even after the defeat of Rāvaṇa, Rāma attributes the credit for the destruction of demons to his companions[13]. This indicates that he was very humble and free from ego.

Lakṣmaṇa - Lakṣmaṇa emphasizes the importance of self-effort over reliance on fate, stating that success comes through diligent action rather than passive hope[14]. This perspective highlights his practical approach to challenges. By suggesting that Aṅgada undertake the mission as a messenger[15], he demonstrates strategic thinking and a supportive attitude, recognizing the strengths of others and delegating tasks effectively.

Aṅgada - Aṅgada is the main character in this drama. His important attributes are his loyalty and strategic thinking. Even though Rāma killed his father, Aṅgada does not have qualms towards him. Infact, Aṅgada has showcased extreme faith towards Rāma in front of Rāvaṇa. He strategically reminded Rāvaṇa about his defeat by Vāli and Kārtavīrya Arjuna[16]. He constantly kept hammering Rāvaṇa's ego. Even when Rāvaṇa brought Māyā-Sītā, he did not fall for Rāvaṇa's conspiracy. Without any fear, he delivered Rāma's message and cautioned Rāvaṇa about Rāma's strength[17]. This depicts his great amount of bravery. Due to his attributes, he was appointed as a messenger.

Rāvaṇa - In Dutāṅgada, Rāvaṇa's portrayal is as a figure filled with ahankāra (arrogance) and self-praise. His deceitful and cunning nature can be seen through the plot of Māyā-Sītā[18]. This depiction offers a critical lens on wrong person getting power, contrasting notions of humility and communal harmony with ideals of righteous rule. It also showcases the perpetrations of wrong deeds.

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[10] Rāmāyaṇa vi.31.45
[11] प्रख्यातमितिहासादेः Daśarūpaka 1.15
[12] Dutāṅgada 9
[13] Dutāṅgada 54
[14] Dutāṅgada 5
[15] Dutāṅgada P. 11.3
[16] Dutāṅgada 22
[17] Dutāṅgada 39
[18] Dutāṅgada P. 35.1

Dutāṅgada - A Shadow-play?

The Prastāvanā, i.e. prologue itself explicitly identifies Dutāṅgada as a Chāyānāṭaka. If the meaning of Chāyā is accepted as shadow, it sets the stage for a shadow-play experience. The drama has an extensive poetic structure. The predominance of poetic verses over dialogues—comprising more than 50% of the text—aligns with the lyrical nature of shadow-plays, where poetry enhances the ethereal ambiance.

The story of Dutāṅgada is based on Rāmāyaṇa and it was presented during a spring festival in King Tribhuvanapaladeva's court. This timing mirrors traditional shadow-play performances, which often coincide with seasonal festivals celebrating mythological tales.

Subhaṭa has incorporated some of the verses from diverse texts like Hanumannāṭaka[19], Bālarāmāyaṇa[20], Vikramacarita[21], Pañcatantra[22] etc. It showcases a tapestry of narratives, which is an important aspect of shadow-plays that weave multiple stories to enrich the performance.

In Dutāṅgada, it can be seen that very few characters are on the stage at the same time which is another aspect of shadow-play. In shadow-play, ideally the minimal number of performers are on the stage, to ensure that the limited figures of the shadow puppets will allow the audience to equally focus on both the narrative and visual projections. This balance is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the shadow-play, as it could be challenging for audience to understand the figurines while paying attention on the narrative.

The frequent use of vocative forms when introducing or addressing characters in the Dutāṅgada[23] supports the hypothesis of it being a shadow-play as it becomes easier to determine the characters illustrated by shadows.

Even though these points can be used to state Dutāṅgada as a shadow-play, some scholars have provided different opinions in this regard. According to Dasgupta and De, it does not have any different significant aspects than other dramas. Even the stage-directions do not have any featural assets that will prove it to be a shadow-play. Its self-description as Chāyānāṭaka is not enough to prove it a shadow-play[24].

Some scholars have interpreted this term differently. According to some scholars, the term Chāyānāṭaka does not necessarily mean a shadow-play. Monier-Williams, in his dictionary, has mentioned that Chāyānāṭaka is a kind of drama which is imitative of another. So here term Chāyā refers to imitation or reflection. According to Rājendralālamitra, the term may have referred to a spectacle or procession rather than a literal shadow play[25]. If this perspective is considered then it could mean that the shorter recension of Dutāṅgada may serve as a condensed, imitative adaption of the larger version. As it is already mentioned that the shorter recension was performed during a spring festival, it corroborates the perspective that it could be an imitation rather than a full-fledged shadow-play.

[19] Dutāṅgada 9, 10, 21, 22, 26, 35, 37, 38
[20] Dutāṅgada 51, 54
[21] Dutāṅgada 18
[22] Dutāṅgada 5
[23] वत्स लक्ष्मण । Dutāṅgada P. 8.3, वत्स विभीषण । Dutāṅgada P. 17.2, सखे चित्राङ्गद । P. Dutāṅgada 53.3
[24] History of Sanskrit literature (S. N. Dasgupta and S. K. De, 1947) P. 503.17
[25] The Sanskrit drama in its origin, development, theory and practice (A. B. Keith, 1924) P. 269.14

Conclusion

Chāyānāṭakas are not just the means of entertainment but also social events that foster moral values and social commitment. By examining the characterizations of certain characters from Dutāṅgada and understanding their values, it can be deduced that Dutāṅgada presents a rich tapestry of cultural elements, social norms and ethical values. Though there are no concrete evidences of Dutāṅgada being a shadow-play, one cannot deny the possibility. This ambiguity highlights the need for further research into the evolution and characteristics of Chāyānāṭaka in ancient Indian theatre.

In essence, while the exact origins of shadow theatre in India remain uncertain, historical texts and performances like Dutāṅgada shed light on its rich legacy. This art form not only entertained audience but also served as a medium for cultural expression and storytelling across generations.

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सांस्कृतिकदृष्ट्या तृतीयाप्रकृतिविचारः

आमोद केळकर

प्रास्ताविकम्

आधुनिकसमाजे "LGBTQ" इति संज्ञया निर्दिश्यमानः विषयः मानवजीवनस्य लैङ्गिक-विविधतायाः, लैङ्गिक-परिचयस्य स्वरूपं प्रतिपादयति। अस्य विषयस्य चर्चा पाश्चात्यदेशेषु विशेषतया प्रचलिता अस्ति, किन्तु भारतीयपरम्परायामपि, विशेषतः संस्कृतसाहित्ये, एतादृशानां विविधलैङ्गिकपरिचयानां उल्लेखाः, संकेताः, च सुस्पष्टतया दृश्यन्ते।

संस्कृतसाहित्यं न केवलं धार्मिक-आध्यात्मिकविचाराणां भाण्डारं, अपि तु सामाजिकजीवनस्य सूक्ष्मविश्लेषणस्य दर्पणं अस्ति। वेदेषु, उपनिषत्सु, पुराणेषु, महाकाव्येषु, नाट्यशास्त्रे, कामशास्त्रे च विविधप्रकारेण मानवस्वभावस्य निरूपणं कृतम् अस्ति। तत्र "तृतीयप्रकृति", "नपुंसक", "क्लीब", "शण्ड" इत्यादयः शब्दाः दृश्यन्ते, ये आधुनिकसमाजे LGBTQ इति अवधारणया सह साम्यं वहन्ति।

एवं संस्कृतसाहित्ये लैङ्गिकविविधतायाः निरूपणं केवलं शब्दरूपेण न, अपि तु कथानकानां, रूपकानां, दार्शनिकदृष्टीनां च माध्यमेन अभिव्यक्तम् अस्ति। एते शब्दाः केवलं जैविकभेदं न सूचयन्ति, किन्तु सामाजिकस्थानं, व्यवहारः, तथा सांस्कृतिकदृष्टिकोणं अपि प्रकाशयन्ति।

अस्मिन् शोधलेखे संस्कृतसाहित्ये प्रयुक्तानां तादृशानां शब्दानां, तेषां व्युत्पत्तेः, सन्दर्भस्य सम्यक् विश्लेषणं क्रियते।

एलजीबीटीक्यू (LGBTQ) इति शब्दः आधुनिकसमाजे लिङ्ग-परिचय (Gender Identity)तथा (Sexual Orientation) सम्बन्धितानां व्यक्तीनां समूहं निर्दिशति। अस्य संक्षेपस्य विस्तारः अयं भवति—

- **L (Lesbian)** – या स्त्री अन्यां स्त्रियम् प्रति आकर्षणं अनुभवति।
- **G (Gay)**– यः पुरुषः अन्यं पुरुषं प्रति आकर्षितः भवति (कदाचित् स्त्रीषु अपि प्रयुज्यते) ।
- **B (Bisexual)**– यः व्यक्तिः उभयलिङ्गयोः (स्त्री-पुरुषयोः) प्रति आकर्षणं अनुभवति।
- **T (Transgender)** – ये व्यक्तयः स्वस्य जन्मलिङ्गात् भिन्नं लिङ्ग-परिचयं अनुभवन्ति।
- **Q (Queer/Questioning)** – ये स्वस्य लैङ्गिकता अथवा लिङ्ग-परिचयं अन्वेषयन्ति।

सामान्यपरिचयः

संस्कृतवाङ्मये "**तृतीयप्रकृतिः**" इति संज्ञया अपि कथ्यते।
वाचस्पत्यम्, शब्दकल्पद्रुमः, आपटे-शब्दकोशे उधृतानां शब्दानां विवरणम् -

१) पोटा -

पोटा शब्दः अमरकोशे प्राप्यते[1] । यत्र पुरुषस्य लक्षणानि किन्तु स्त्रीलिङ्गम् इति वर्णनं लभ्यते । पुट् धातोः अच् प्रत्ययात् निष्पन्नः अयं शब्दः । पुरुषलक्षणयुक्तायां स्त्रियाम् इति वाचस्पत्यम् ।मोनीयर विल्यम्स शब्दकोशे a hermaphrodite or a woman with a beard इति उक्तमस्ति । तत्रैव Female servant इत्यपि अर्थः दत्तः । अस्य शब्द सर्वथा हीनभावेन प्रयुक्तः नास्ति किन्तु किञ्चित हीनभावस्तु दृश्यते ।

1आचार्यानी तु पुंयोगे स्यादर्यी क्षत्रियी तथा ।उपाध्यायान्युपाध्यायी पोटा स्त्रीपुंसलक्षणा ॥ अमरकोशः २.६.१५

२) क्लीब -

क्लीबशब्दस्य आपटे संस्कृत-Englishकोशे (Neuter)इति अर्थः प्राप्यते।आपटे हिंदी कोशानुसारेण 'नपुंसक', 'पुरुषार्थहिनः' इति अर्थः। वैकल्ये अप्रागल्भ्ये च इति वाचस्पत्यम् ।अस्मिन् शब्दस्य हीनभावः स्पष्टतया अवगम्यते । वाचस्पत्ये 'अप्रागल्भ्य' शब्दस्य प्रवृत्तत्त्वात् हीनभावः अङ्गीकर्तव्यः ।

३) नपुंसकम् –

न स्त्री न पुमान् इति विवरणम् अस्य शब्दस्य दीयते । उभयोः बीजसामान्यात् जायते वै नपुंसकम् इत्यपि उक्तम् अस्ति । मोनीयर-विल्यम शब्दकोशे अपि 'Neither male of Female' इति उक्तम् ।एषः शब्दः व्याकरणशास्त्रे अपि अस्मिन् एव अर्थेन प्रयुज्यते । अस्य शब्दस्य अर्थस्य च नकारात्मता न दृश्यते ।

सूतिमासो वैजननो गर्भो भ्रूण इमौ समौ ।
तृतीया प्रकृतिः शण्ढः क्लीबः पण्डो नपुंसके ॥

- अमरकोशः २.६.३९

सूतिमासः जननसम्बद्धः कालः अस्ति। "गर्भः" तथा "भ्रूणः" इति शब्दौ समानार्थकौ स्तः। "तृतीया प्रकृतिः", "शण्डः", "क्लीबः", "पण्डः" तथा "नपुंसकः" — एते सर्वे शब्दाः न पुरुषः न स्त्री इति अर्थे प्रयुज्यन्ते।

४) पण्ड– पण्डशब्दोपि अमरकोशे लभ्यते । अस्य शब्दस्य 'नपुंसक'इत्येव अर्थः । हिजडा इत्यपि अर्थः आपटे शब्दकोशे वर्तते । अस्य शब्दस्य हिनभावत्त्वं नास्ति ।

"हिजड़ा" इति शब्दः प्रचलितं एकं सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक-समुदायं सूचयति, यः पारम्परिक-पुरुष-स्त्री-भेदात् परे स्थितान् परिचयान् धारयति। अयं शब्दः संस्कृतात् न, अपि तु फारसी-उर्दू-भाषाभ्यां उत्पन्नः अस्ति। तथापि यद् भावः अनेन शब्देन व्यक्तः भवति, तस्य प्राचीन-भारतीय-चिन्तने साम्यं दृश्यते।

विशेषतः "तृतीयप्रकृतिः" इति संकल्पना अत्र उल्लेखनीया अस्ति, या "तृतीयः स्वभावः" इति अर्थं ददाति। एषा संज्ञा तेषां व्यक्तीनां विषये प्रयुज्यते ये सामान्य-पुरुष-स्त्री-भेदं न अनुसरन्ति।

५) शण्ढः[2]–

शण्ढशब्दः वर्षवरतुल्यः इति उक्तमस्ति । वर्षवरः नाम **अन्तःपुरचारिणनपुंसकाः** । अतः शण्ढशब्दस्यापि अर्थः नपुंसकः एव सिद्ध्यति । अस्मिन् शब्देन राज्ञः अन्तपुरे तृतीयप्रकृतिजनाः कार्यं कुर्वन्ति स्म इति सिद्ध्यति । 'खोजा इति भाषा' इति शब्दकल्पद्रुमः ।

खोजा–नपुंसकयोः तुलना

"खोजा" तथा "नपुंसक" इति शब्दयोः सामाजिके सन्दर्भे तुलना आवश्यकी । उभौ शब्दौ अप्रमाणितपुरुषत्वेन सम्बद्धौ स्तः, किन्तु समाजे तयोः उपयोगः भिन्नः अस्ति।

मध्यकालीनभारते, विशेषतः मुघलकाले, "खोजा" इति शब्दः तेषां व्यक्तीनां कृते प्रयुज्यते स्म ये राजदरबारेषु, अन्तःपुरेषु च कार्यं कुर्वन्ति स्म। ते समाजे स्पष्टतया दृश्याः आसन् ।"नपुंसक" इति शब्दः सामान्यसामाजिकनिर्देशः आसीत्। अयं न कस्यचित् निश्चितसमूहस्य नाम, किन्तु तेषां व्यक्तीनां विषये प्रयुज्यते येषां विषये समाजः मन्यते यत् तेषां पौरुष्यं नास्ति ।नपुंसकशब्दस्तु शब्दः सामान्यतया शक्त्यभावं दर्शयति। अस्य उपयोगः प्रायः हीनभावेन भवति।

2 शण्ढो वर्षवरस्तुल्यौ सेवकार्थ्यनुजीविनः ।विषयानन्तरो राजा शत्रुर्मित्रमतः परम् ॥ - अमरकोशः २.८.९

आधुनिकसंदर्भे तृतीयप्रकृतिविचारः

विश्वे LGBTQ+ व्यक्तीनां वैधानिकस्थितिः अत्यन्तं जटिला असमानाश्च दृश्यते। एषा स्थिति: सांस्कृतिकमूल्यानां, राजनैतिकप्रणालीनां, ऐतिहासिकप्रभावानां च गभीरभेदान् दर्शयति। यद्यपि बहुषु प्रदेशेषु महती प्रगति: जाता, तथापि वैश्विकचित्रं अद्यापि विभक्तम् अस्ति—केचन देशाः पूर्णसमतां स्वीकुर्वन्ति, अन्ये तु LGBTQ+ परिचयान् अपराधरूपेण मन्यन्ते वा प्रतिबन्धं कुर्वन्ति।

यूरोप-अमेरिकाखण्डयोः केषुचित् देशेषु LGBTQ+ अधिकाराः दृढतया विधिसंरचनायां स्थापिताः सन्ति। कॅनडातथा स्पेन इत्यादयः देशाः समलिङ्गविवाहं वैधीकृतवन्तः, तथावृत्तिः,निवासः, सार्वजनिकसेवा इत्यादिषु भेदभावनिषेधनियमाः अपि स्थापिताः। अर्जेन्टिनादेशः अपि विशेषतया उल्लेखनीयः अस्ति, यतः न केवलं समलिङ्गविवाहं स्वीकृतवान्, अपि तु उन्नताः लिङ्गपरिचयसम्बद्धाः नियमाः अपि स्थापिता: सन्ति, येन व्यक्तयः स्वलिङ्गपरिवर्तनं वैधानिकतया कर्तुं शक्नुवन्ति। आफ्रिकाखण्डे दक्षिण-अफ्रिका एकं प्रमुखं उदाहरणम् अस्ति, यतः तस्य संविधानम् लैङ्गिकाभिरुच्याधारितभेदभावं स्पष्टतया निषेधति।

अन्यानि बहुनिराष्ट्राणि, यत्र प्रगति: आंशिकरूपेण अथवा असमानरूपेण जाता। उदाहरणार्थम्, भारतदेशे २०१८ तमे वर्षे समलिङ्गसम्बन्धाः अपराधत्वात् मुक्ताः, किन्तु समलिङ्गविवाहः तथा पारिवारिकाधिकाराः अद्यापि न स्वीकृताः। जपानदेशे अपि कतिपयाः क्रमिकपदानि गृहीतानि—स्थानीयशासनानि सहजीवनप्रमाणपत्राणि दातुं आरब्धम् —किन्तु राष्ट्रस्तरे मान्यता नास्ति। ब्राझीलदेशे समलिङ्गविवाहः वैधः अस्ति, तथापि सामाजिकसमस्याः अद्यापि वर्तन्ते, यथा LGBTQ+ व्यक्तिषु हिंसायाः उच्चदरः। एते उदाहरणानि दर्शयन्ति यत् वैधानिकपरिवर्तनं सर्वदा व्यवहारजीवने पूर्णसमतां न जनयति।

विपरीतरूपेण, केचन देशाः अद्यापि LGBTQ+ परिचयान् अपराधरूपेण मन्यन्ते, प्रायः धार्मिक वा उपनिवेशकालीननियमाधारितव्यवस्थायाम्। सऊदी-अरेबिया तथा ईरान इत्यादिषु देशेषु समलिङ्गसम्बन्धाः अवैधाः सन्ति, तथा तेषां कृते कठोरदण्डाः, अन्ये गम्भीरदण्डाः, निर्दिश्यन्ते। आफ्रिकाखण्डस्य कतिपयेषु प्रदेशेषु, यथा युगाण्डा, नवीननियमाः अधिकं प्रतिबन्धं कृतवन्तः, येन LGBTQ+ समुदायः अधिकं उपेक्षितः जातः। एतादृशेषु वैधानिकपरिस्थितिषु मूलभूताधिकाराः अपि न दत्ताः सन्ति ।

समग्रतया, LGBTQ+ अधिकाराणां वैश्विकवैधानिकस्थितिः उन्नतिपूर्णा अपि असमानता-युक्ता च अस्ति। केचन राष्ट्राः समावेशकनीतयः स्वीकृतवन्तः, अन्ये तु दण्डात्मकनियमानां पालनं कुर्वन्ति। एषा भिन्नता दर्शयति यत् LGBTQ+ अधिकाराः सामाजिक-राजनैतिक-सांस्कृतिकतत्त्वैः गभीरतया सम्बद्धाः सन्ति, अतः तेषां विकासः निरन्तरः तथा एषा विवादपूर्णा प्रक्रिया अस्ति।

- विश्वस्य जनसंख्यायाः प्रायः**७–१०** प्रतिशतं जनाः LGBTQ-रूपेण आत्मानं निर्दिशन्ति, किन्तु संख्या देशानुसारं भिन्ना अस्ति।
- LGBTQ-सम्बद्धाः व्यक्तयःसर्वेषु समाजेषु, संस्कृतिषु, आर्थिकवर्गेषु च दृश्यन्ते।
- सामाजिक-स्वीकारःप्रदेशानुसारं बहुधा भिन्नः अस्ति; केषुचित् प्रदेशेषु अधिकः, केषुचित् न्यूनः।
- युवजनाः अधिकं स्वीकुर्वन्ति, वृद्धजनाः तु तुलनया न्यूनम्।
- समलैङ्गिक-संबन्धाः अद्यापिसप्ततिः अधिकेषु देशेषु निषिद्धाः सन्ति।
- LGBTQ-जनाः बहुधाकुटुम्बेन अस्वीकृताः भवन्ति, यतः ते एकाकिनः भवन्ति।
- विद्यालयेषु LGBTQ-युवानां प्रतिउत्पीडनं (bullying) अधिकं दृश्यते।
- कार्यस्थलेषु अपिअसमान-नियुक्तिः, वेतनभेदः च दृश्यन्ते।

- तेआरोग्य-सेवासु प्रवेशे बाधाः अनुभवन्ति।
- बहवः जनाःस्व-परिचयं न प्रकाशयन्ति।
- सामाजिक-कलङ्कःमानसिक-रोगान् वर्धयति।
- सञ्चार-माध्यमैः तथा डिजिटल-माध्यमैःदृश्यता वर्धिता अस्ति।
- लिङ्ग, जातिः, धर्मः इत्यादयःभेदभावस्य प्रकारं निर्धारयन्ति।
- केषुचित् देशेषुस्वीकारः वर्धते, अन्यत्र तु विरोधः अस्ति।
- मित्र-समूहाः तथा समुदाय-संघटनाःसाहाय्यं कुर्वन्ति।
- सामाजिक-दृष्टिःसंस्कृति, धर्मः, राजनीति च महत्वपूर्णा अस्ति।
- अद्यापि LGBTQ-समुदायःअसमानतां तथा सामाजिक-बहिष्कारं अनुभवति।

उपसंहारः

यद्यपि "LGBTQ" इति आधुनिकशब्दः संस्कृतसाहित्येन दृश्यते, तथापि तस्य मूलविचाराः प्राचीनभारतीयचिन्तने सर्वथा अपरिचिताः न सन्ति। "तृतीया-प्रकृतिः" इत्यादयः विचाराः, तथा विविधाः लिङ्गपरिचयाः लैङ्गिकव्यवहाराश्च, प्राचीनग्रन्थेषु उल्लिखिताः सन्ति। लिङ्गवैचित्र्यस्य ज्ञानं आसीत् इति ज्ञायते।

अस्मिन् अध्ययनमध्ये "तृतीयाप्रकृतिः" इति संकल्पना सांस्कृतिकदृष्ट्या विस्तृतरूपेण परीक्षिता। प्राचीनभारतीयसाहित्ये तृतीयाप्रकृतिः केवलं लैंगिकभेदस्य विषयः नासीत्, अपि तु सामाजिकस्वीकारस्य द्योतकः आसीत्।भिन्नेषु ग्रन्थेषु अपि एषा संकल्पना विविधरूपेण दृष्टा।

आधुनिके विश्वे LGBTQ समुदायस्य विषये जागरूकता, अधिकारचेतना, तथा सामाजिकस्वीकारः क्रमशः वर्धमानः दृश्यते। तथापि, अनेकेषु देशेषु अद्यापि भेदभावः, सामाजिकबहिष्कारः, तथा असमानताः विद्यमानाः सन्ति। अस्य अध्ययनस्य वैश्विकदृष्ट्या परीक्षणेन ज्ञायते यत्, यद्यपि सांस्कृतिकभेदाः सन्ति, तथापि मानवीयमूल्यानि—सम्मानः, समानता, तथा स्वातन्त्र्यम्—सर्वत्र समानरूपेण अपेक्षितानि सन्ति।

अतः निष्कर्षरूपेण वयं वदामः यत्, "तृतीयाप्रकृतिः" इति संकल्पना केवलं ऐतिहासिकसांस्कृतिकपरिप्रेक्ष्ये सीमिता न भवति, किन्तु सा अद्यतनसमाजे अपि अत्यन्तप्रासंगिका अस्ति। प्राचीनज्ञानस्य आधुनिकमानवाधिकारदृष्ट्या समन्वयः आवश्यकः ।

संदर्भग्रन्थसूचिः

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Concept of Viṣa in the Ṛgveda and in the Atharvaveda

Rajashree Kshirsagar

Aim of The Paper

In the Ṛgveda and in the Atharvaveda we find description of different types of poisons. The very purpose of selecting this topic for research paper is to highlight the types of poison. In the ṚV two hymns describe the poison. In the AV also two hymns describe the poison. Moreover, these hymns describe various names of poison and remedies for destroying poison worthless. Thus, they are employed in the rites against the poison.

Textual interpretations:

Ṛgveda- The first reference of *viṣa* is found in the RV.[1] This hymn describes some types of poison. The seer is Agastya and deities are Water, grass and Sun. This hymn is a spell or charm against poison. It is said that seer Agastya recited this hymn when he suspected that he has been poisoned. Its salient repletion is said to be an effectual antidote against all venoms which are in reptiles, insects, scorpions and are found in the roots. The seer mentions the name of these poisonous creatures and says that somebody of them has infected him with poison. The names are as follows- venomous (*kaṁkata*), slightly venomous (*na kaṁkata*), venomous aquatic worms (*pluṣī*), invisible (*adruṣṭa*) (land reptiles, water snakes). Here he mentions the classes of the venomous creatures. In the second verse herb (*āyatiī)* which is said to be useful as an antidote against the poison, is praised. It is said that, this herb comes towards the infected person and kills the unobserved poisonous creatures; like this, the herb (*parāyatī*) kills the aquatic poisonous creatures.

The third mantra describes names of grasses where these poisonous creatures reside. They are mainly *śarāsa, kuśārāsa, darbhāsa, sairya, munja*, and *vīraṇa* grass. These creatures seem to be lurking thieves at evening time. These reptiles are unseen or seen by all (*vivśadṛṭṣa*). Therefore, the seer tells to be alert at this time.

The relatives of snakes are mentioned; heaven is the (father), earth is the mother, Soma the moon, is the brother and Aditi is the sister (other texts like Puraṇas it is described that, Kadru is the mother of snakes and Aditi is the mother of gods). A wish is expressed that; these seen or unseen poisonous creatures may stay at their place and live happily (*kam*). Some most venomous creatures like biters of shoulder (belonging to the shoulder) (*aṁsya*) or of limb (*aṅgya*), having needle stings i.e., scorpions (*suchīkā*), *prakaṁkata*- most venomous and unobserved are mentioned here. The seer asks them why they are living here. They all go together from us and leave us.

The Sun (Sūrya) is the slayer of these seen and unseen creatures and consumes the evil spirits which are present at night. Sā interprets that, when the sun rises all the venomous creatures ran away and the sun kills the evil spirits. The sun goes upwards killing everything (*viśvāni*). Also, Āditya scorches seen and unseen venomous creatures from the mountain. Notable point is that, Sūrya and Āditya are two separate gods mentioned here. It can be said that, in the later period these become the synonyms of Sun.

The seer hangs (*sajāmi*) the poison in the Sun[2] like a leather bottle in the house of vendor of spirits (*surāvato gṛhe*). Further he says that by doing this, the wine merchant will not die and we also. The path of venom is far away. The Sun was shining horses and he turns the *viṣa* into sweet. Sā interprets that, the *Madhula* means a kind of knowledge

[1] RV 1.191

[2] RV 1.191. … *sūrye viṣam asajāmi*

which gives honey and capable to remove the venom (*madhudatri nirviṣakarti madhuvidya*).

The little bird named as *śhakuntīkā* has swallowed or consumed all the poison of a person who is affected by the poison. This bird is very little and is said to be a remover of poison. It removes the poison but it will not die. Sā interprets that, this little bird is *kapiṅjalī*-partridge. Verses no ten to twelve describe the things which have capacity to remove the poison. Also, these verses describe some numbers which indicate bird, rivers and peahens.

The twenty-one *viṣpuliṅgakā* (bright sparks) have seven tongues and by these tongues they swallowed the strength of poison. These are twenty-one according to their colour. Their tongues are as bright as fire. Further it is said that, after removing the poison these *viṣpuliṅgakā* will not die.

The ninety-nine rivers have a power to stay the venoms course and to destroy the poison. Twenty-one peahens (21) and seven rivers (*svasāra*) carried the poison far away from the body of a infected person like the girls who are carrying the water in the jar. Peahens are known as the great enemies of snakes. Sā interprets that, these rivers are including Ganga and other famous rivers. The poisonous insect is very small and the *kuṣumbhak* means *mongooos* crushes it. The seer says that, if the *mongooos* is unable to do this, he will crush it with a stone. He turns the poison away and departs unto distant land. This *nakul- mongoos* is the enemy of the snakes.

The RV hymn 7.50

In the introduction of this hymn, it is mentioned that, this hymn is employed for removing the poison.[3] The seer is Vasiṣṭa and the deities are *maitrāvaruṇī, āgneyī, vaiśavdevī* and river *gang*ā.

The seer requested to Mitra and Varuṇa for protecting and guarding him from the poison; here in this world; so that, the poison does not come towards him. He says that, he drives away afar the scorpion (*ajakāva*) from his sight and wishes that the winding worm (snakes) does not touch him, does not wound his foot. Sā interprets the pada *ajakā* means a name of disease[4]. The refulgent Agni is requested to drive far away the eruption (*vandana*) which appears in the joints and overspreads on the ankles and knees. Sā interprets the term Vandana means the name of a poison. All the gods are requested to drive away the poisons which is formed upon the tree name as Salmali, which is found in the rivers and which is produced by plant. The rivers which are flown the steep declivities (*pravata*), flown in the valleys (*nivata*), on the heights and the rivers who do not have water are requested to be *aśipada* (means averting the sickness calls as *śhipada*). All the rivers that are full of waters called as auspicious goddesses (*śivā* Devī) and requested to be *aśimada* (not destructive like *śimida* or keep us free from *śimida*). The meaning of this term is obscure.

Atharvaveda (4.6)

The hymn 4.6 describes the various types of poison and places where they are found. At the same time, it describes certain abnormal personalities also. One person (Brāhmaṇa) is described as huge and having ten heads (*dáśaśīrṣa*) and ten mouths (*dáśāasya*). It is described that he firstly (*prathama*) drank (*prapau*) Soma and made the poison ineffective (*arasa*). The relation of Soma and *viṣa* is referred. The second verse

[3]RV7.50 *asya sūktsya prati ṛcam viṣādiharaṇe viniyoga.*
[4] *ajakā nāma rogaviśeṣa*

describes the power of speech (*vāc*). Here the seer says that, his words are so effective that, by means of his words, the poison becomes worthless.

He also says that, till the heaven and earth are extended (*varimna*), seven rivers are flowing, up to this period his words will be spoilers of poison[5].

A certain bird or eagle (*garutmān*) having strong wings, is referred to with the adjective Suparṇa and it is mentioned that this bird first consumed (*āvayata*) the poison and overpowered it. Also, the Viṣa is directly addressed and said that it is not intoxicated (*amīmadaḥ*) to Garutmān. Garutmān consumed the poison and made it ineffective. The relation of Garutmān (Garuḍa) and Viṣa is mentioned here. The poison is the drink (*pītu*) for Garutman.

The fourth verse describes activities. The seer describes a certain person who he throws the poison with his five fingers (*páñcāngu*) by means of bent bow (*vakra dhánu*) and hurled arrow; further he says that, he exorcises the poison through *apaskambha* (Apaskambha is a place where the poisonous arrow is to be released).

The fifth and sixth mantras describe different places where the poison is anointed. Also, different parts and types of arrows are mentioned i.e., pointed end (*śalya*), (*prānjanāt*), (*parṇadhi*), barb (*apāṣṭa*), dagger (*śṛnga*), neck of the arrow (*kulamala*) etc. The seer says that he turned the poison futile or worthless and at the same time the wood of arrow becomes worthless (*vṛkṣasya dhanu*). The seer is able to exorcise the poison from these places.

The seventh mantra describes the process of making poison and about the persons who are involved or engaged in this i.e., the men who ground the poison (*ápīṣan*), who besmeared the poison (on arrow) (*ádidahan*), who threw the lances which are besmeared by the poison (*avāsṛjan*). The seer wants to punish them. The mountain called Viṣagiri is the place of poison. Also, the reference is made to the person who digs out the poison.

Contents (4.7)

The hymn 4.7 is used in the rites which are to be performed to remove the poison. The seer says that, *amṛta* is sprinkled in the water of Varṇāvatī River and by means of this water the he wants to ward off the poison. The water is prayed to avoid the poison. From this description it can be said that, *amṛta* is used for avoiding the poison of diseased person. This Varaṇāvatī perhaps is the name of a place or a river.

The second mantra describes places of the poison (*prāchya, udichya, adhara*). The poison spreads in all directions (*arasam prāchyam*) and by means of *karambha* (gruel of sesame) the seer says that he makes the poison sapless (*arasam*). In the mantra it is described that, *karambha* is used against the poison. The poison is exchangeable with *karambha. Karambha* means a *mantha*- a dish of parched grain and is described as *tirya* (prepared from sesame seeds).

Third mantra describes some entity having bad or evil forms (*duṣṭana*) and due to hunger this person (?) consumed the poison. Therefore, the poison did not affect him or injure him.

The 4th and 5th mantra describe the power of speech. The intoxicating herb Madāvatī is directly addressed to in the 4th mantra and said that the seer will ward off the poison by means of his speech. The seer says that, by means of speech (*vacas*) he keeps this herb aside as a boiling pot (*caru*) or put away like an arrow (*śará*). Moreover, the seer says that, by means of his speech, he made the poison of the herb to stand. Also, by

[5] AV 4.6.2 yāvatī dyāvāpṛthivī varimṇā yāvat sapta síndhavo vitaṣṭhire, vācam viṣasya dūṣaṇīm tāmito níravādiṣam

means of spell the herb Madāvatī is collected together like a group of people. He digs this herb by spade (*abhirkhāta*) like a station or immovable tree which does not injure.

The 6th mantra describes different means of purchasing the poison. Poison can be purchased by exchanging the undesirable objects like *pavasta-* (cover or a garment)*, durśa* (a kind of woven cloth)*, ajina* (goatskins) etc. The seer orders the herb Madāvatī not to spread over and be stationed at one place like a tree.

Observations: in the Ṛgveda

1) Here along with the classes of venomous creatures, the herbs (*āyatī, parāyatī*) are described which are said to be useful as an antidote against the poison.
2) The Sun is the slayer of seen and unseen poisonous creatures and consumes the evil spirits. Mitra and Varuṇa are requested to protect and to guard the seer from the poison.

Observations: Atharvaveda (4.6)

1) According to the AV Sarvānukramaṇī (2.17) the deity of the hymn 4.6 is Takṣaka. Perhaps from the tenor of the hymn, it can be said that, this hymn refers to Viṣa.
2) According to the AV Sarvānukramaṇī (2.17) the deity of the hymn 4.7 is Takṣaka and *vanaspati.* It is noticed that, this *vanaspati* is not medicinal herb but it is an intoxicating herb which is harmful to man. Also, the reference to Takṣaka is not found.
3) The hymn 4.6 describes the various types of poison and places where they are found. At the same time, it describes certain abnormal personalities also. The relation of Soma and *viṣa* is referred to.
4) A certain bird or eagle (*garutmān*) having strong wings, is referred to with the adjective Suparṇa and it is mentioned that this bird first consumed (*āvayata*) the poison and overpowered it. The relation of Garutmān (Garuḍa) and Viṣa is mentioned here. The poison is the drink (*pītu*) for Garutman.
5) A certain person is mentioned in the mantra and it is said that he throws the poison with his five fingers (*páñcāngu*) by means of bent bow (*vakra dhánu*) and hurled arrow. Further he says that, he removes the poison through *apaskambha* (Apaskambha is a place where the poisonous arrow is to be released).
6) Different places where the poison is anointed are described. Moreover, different parts and types of arrows are mentioned. The seer says that he turned the poison futile or worthless and at the same time the wood of arrow becomes worthless (*vṛkṣasya dhanu*). The seer is able to exorcise the poison from these places.
7) Mountain being the place of origin of poison Viṣagiri, is first time mentioned in the AV. Poison is anointed on the hurled arrow is first time mentioned in the AV.
8) It is said that, *amṛta* is sprinkled in the water of Varṇāvatī River and by means of this water the he wants to ward off the poison. The water is prayed to avoid the poison.
9) The places of the poison are described (*prāchya, udichya, adhara*). The poison is described as spread in all directions (*arasam prāchyam*) and by means of *karambha* (gruel of sesame) the seer says that he makes the poison sapless (*arasam*). This *karambha* is used against the poison. The poison is exchangeable with *karambha.*
10) Third mantra of the hymn AV 4.7, describes some entity having bad or evil forms (*duṣṭana*) and due to hunger this person (?) consumed the poison. Therefore, the poison did not affect him or injure him.
11) The power of speech is mentioned. The intoxicating herb Madāvatī is directly addressed to in the 4th mantra and said that the seer will ward off the poison by means of his speech.

12) Different means of purchasing poison are described (AV 4.7.5). Poison can be purchased by exchanging the undesirable objects.
13) A powerful person having hold on the poison is described. He is so powerful that, he made the poison sapless (AV4.7.6).
14) As these four hymns describe the types of poison and remedies for making the poison sapless, are used in the medicinal rites against the poison.

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Sustainable India through Tamil Culture: Insights from Indian Religions and Philosophy under NEP-2020

M R Ramesh

1. Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative shift in India's educational landscape by advocating for the integration of indigenous knowledge systems, including India's rich religious and philosophical traditions, into modern education. This policy recognizes the potential of India's cultural heritage to address contemporary challenges, particularly in the realm of sustainable development. Tamil culture, with its millennia-old traditions, offers profound insights into sustainable living, ethical governance, and social harmony. This paper explores how Tamil culture, rooted in Indian religions and philosophy, can contribute to the vision of a sustainable India under the framework of NEP-2020.

Tamil Nadu, one of India's oldest civilizations, has a rich cultural and literary heritage that emphasizes harmony with nature, social justice, and ethical living. Ancient Tamil texts such as the *Tirukkural, Sangam literature,* and the works of the Bhakti saints provide timeless wisdom that aligns with the principles of sustainability. By integrating these insights into the education system, India can foster a generation of environmentally conscious and socially responsible citizens.

2. Tamil Culture and Sustainable Development: A Historical Perspective

2.1. The Ecological Wisdom of Sangam Literature

The *Sangam literature*, dating back to 300 BCE–300 CE, is one of the earliest and most profound bodies of Tamil literature, offering a rich repository of ecological wisdom. The texts emphasize the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature, underlining the necessity of environmental conservation. The *Ainkurunuru*, *Purananuru*, and *Natrinai* illustrate the concept of five landscapes (*thinais*)—Kurinji (hills), Mullai (forests), Marutham (agricultural lands), Neithal (coastal regions), and Palai (arid zones). Each landscape is intrinsically linked to specific human activities and environmental elements, portraying an early understanding of sustainable resource utilization.

The *Mullai* landscape, associated with forests, symbolizes biodiversity conservation and sustainable foraging practices. Ancient Tamil communities revered forests and adopted eco-friendly practices to maintain ecological balance. Similarly, the *Neithal* landscape, depicting coastal regions, emphasizes sustainable fishing techniques, the responsible use of marine resources, and the preservation of coastal ecosystems. These traditional practices resonate with modern sustainability principles, advocating for resource management that ensures long-term ecological stability.

Furthermore, *Sangam* poets documented the delicate relationship between agriculture and environmental conditions, recognizing the impact of seasonal variations on crop yield. The *Marutham* landscape, representing fertile agricultural lands, underscores the importance of water conservation and soil fertility management. These insights from classical Tamil literature provide an invaluable historical perspective on sustainability, demonstrating that environmental consciousness was deeply embedded in Tamil cultural heritage.

2.2. The *Tirukkural*: A Blueprint for Ethical and Sustainable Living

The *Tirukkural*, authored by the Tamil sage Thiruvalluvar, stands as an enduring guide to ethical and sustainable living. This seminal work, composed of 1,330 couplets, is divided into three sections: *Aram* (virtue), *Porul* (wealth), and *Inbam* (love). The text

offers profound wisdom on moral conduct, governance, and economic sustainability, advocating for a balanced approach to life that aligns with contemporary sustainability objectives.

The *Aram* section highlights the significance of ethical conduct and environmental stewardship. Thiruvalluvar states, *"The world is sustained by the rain; rain is sustained by the conduct of the virtuous" (Kural 20)*. This couplet underscores the interconnectedness of human ethics and environmental well-being, reinforcing the principle that sustainable development is rooted in responsible human actions. It promotes the idea that societal harmony and ecological balance are mutually dependent, a perspective that remains relevant in modern environmental discourse.

In the *Porul* section, Thiruvalluvar emphasizes responsible resource management and the fair distribution of wealth. Sustainable governance, as outlined in the *Tirukkural*, involves ensuring economic equity, avoiding exploitation of natural resources, and fostering long-term prosperity. The text encourages leaders to adopt policies that protect both people and nature, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The *Tirukkural* also advocates for a life of moderation, discouraging excessive consumption and material greed. By promoting values such as contentment and social responsibility, Thiruvalluvar presents a framework for sustainable living that is relevant across time periods. His teachings reflect a vision of development that harmonizes economic progress with ethical integrity and environmental consciousness.

3. The Bhakti Movement: Promoting Social Equity and Inclusivity

The Bhakti movement, which emerged in different parts of India between the 6th and 17th centuries CE, was a powerful spiritual and socio-religious reform movement that sought to transcend rigid caste hierarchies and promote inclusivity. Rooted in devotional worship (bhakti), the movement challenged Brahminical orthodoxy and embraced followers from all social backgrounds, advocating for a more egalitarian society.

3.1 The Tamil Bhakti Movement and Social Reform

The Tamil Bhakti movement, which flourished between the 6th and 9th centuries CE, played a significant role in shaping South Indian religious and social thought. The movement was spearheaded by the Alvars (Vaishnavite saints) and the Nayanars (Shaivite saints), who composed devotional hymns in Tamil, making spiritual knowledge accessible to the common people. Prominent figures such as Thirugnanasambandar, Thirunavukkarasar, and Andal were instrumental in spreading the ideals of devotion, equality, and social justice.

One of the most notable aspects of the movement was its rejection of caste-based discrimination. Bhakti saints emphasized that devotion to God was the ultimate path to salvation, rather than birth-based privileges or ritualistic practices. Their teachings resonated deeply with marginalized communities, including lower castes and women, who found a sense of empowerment through Bhakti practices.

3.2 Andal: A Voice for Women and Inclusivity

Andal, the only female Alvar saint, made a profound impact on the Bhakti movement. She composed the *Thiruppavai*, a collection of 30 devotional hymns that highlight devotion, humility, and community bonding. Through her works, Andal challenged the patriarchal norms of her time, advocating for women's active participation in religious and social life. Her legacy continues to inspire movements for gender equality within religious and cultural traditions.

3.3 Challenging Social Hierarchies

The Bhakti saints sought to break down social barriers by advocating for an inclusive spiritual community. Saints such as Thirunavukkarasar and Thirugnanasambandar openly welcomed devotees from all backgrounds, rejecting the rigid caste system. The emphasis on devotion over social status provided lower castes and marginalized groups with a platform to engage in religious and cultural discourse, thus fostering a more inclusive society.

Similarly, other Bhakti traditions across India, such as those led by Kabir, Ravidas, and Mirabai, echoed the Tamil Bhakti movement's core principles. These saints openly criticized caste discrimination and religious orthodoxy, promoting a vision of society where spiritual merit, rather than birth, determined one's worth.

3.4 The Bhakti Movement and the United Nations SDGs

The ideals of the Bhakti movement align with contemporary global goals for social equity. The movement's emphasis on inclusivity and justice corresponds with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly **Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities)** and **Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)**. By fostering a culture of equality and rejecting hierarchical structures, the Bhakti movement contributed to social cohesion and collective well-being.

4. Integrating Tamil Culture into Education under NEP-2020

4.1. Curriculum Development

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 presents a significant opportunity to integrate Tamil cultural and philosophical knowledge into the Indian education system. By emphasizing the inclusion of Indian knowledge systems, NEP-2020 aims to bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern education, fostering a more holistic learning experience. One of the most profound ways to achieve this integration is through curriculum development that reflects Tamil heritage and values.

A key example is the incorporation of the *Tirukkural* into the curriculum. This ancient Tamil text, rich in ethical, philosophical, and moral teachings, can be used to teach ethics, environmental studies, and human values. Similarly, *Sangam literature*, known for its deep ecological consciousness, can be integrated into subjects like geography, environmental science, and sustainable resource management. By embedding Tamil cultural elements into various subjects, students can develop a deep appreciation for their heritage while gaining valuable insights applicable to contemporary issues.

Moreover, history and social studies curricula can include Tamil contributions to governance, mathematics, and science. The advancements made by Tamil scholars in fields such as linguistics, astronomy, and medicine can serve as inspiration for young learners. This integration fosters a sense of pride and cultural continuity while aligning with the NEP's emphasis on a multidisciplinary approach to education.

4.2. Interdisciplinary Research

Interdisciplinary research that explores Tamil culture and sustainability offers immense potential in addressing modern global challenges. Tamil literature and historical texts contain valuable knowledge that can be applied to contemporary fields such as environmental sustainability, social justice, and inclusive governance.

For instance, *Sangam literature* provides detailed descriptions of eco-friendly living and sustainable agricultural practices. Researchers can study these principles to develop modern ecological frameworks and policies. Similarly, Tamil Bhakti saints, including Thiruvalluvar, Manikkavachakar, and Andal, emphasized social equity, compassion, and inclusivity in their teachings. These principles can inform contemporary

policymaking, particularly in areas related to social justice, gender equality, and ethical leadership.

By promoting interdisciplinary research, educational institutions can encourage collaborations between historians, environmental scientists, and policymakers to harness the wisdom embedded in Tamil cultural traditions. Establishing research centers dedicated to Tamil heritage and its contemporary applications can further support the objectives of NEP-2020, ensuring that indigenous knowledge contributes meaningfully to modern academic discourse and policymaking.

4.3. Community Engagement

Community engagement is essential in realizing the vision of a culturally integrated and sustainable education system under NEP-2020. Tamil cultural values emphasize collective well-being, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility. These principles can be translated into community-driven initiatives that enhance societal progress and sustainability.

Educational institutions can collaborate with local communities to implement initiatives inspired by Tamil traditions. For example, tree-planting drives and water conservation projects can draw inspiration from the traditional Tamil reverence for nature, as seen in ancient practices of rainwater harvesting and afforestation. Similarly, students can participate in heritage conservation programs, documenting and preserving Tamil folk traditions, arts, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Another approach is to involve Tamil cultural experts, artists, and historians in educational activities, enabling students to engage directly with their heritage through storytelling, folk performances, and traditional craft workshops. By fostering community-based learning, schools and universities can create an immersive educational experience that not only strengthens cultural identity but also instills values of social responsibility and environmental consciousness.

5. Conclusion

Tamil culture, with its deep-rooted spiritual and philosophical traditions, provides invaluable guidance for fostering sustainability in India. The wisdom embedded in ancient Tamil texts such as the *Tirukkural*, *Sangam literature*, and the teachings of Bhakti saints underscores ethical living, environmental responsibility, and social justice. These principles align with contemporary sustainability goals, making them highly relevant for addressing challenges like climate change, inequality, and resource depletion.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 presents an opportunity to integrate Tamil cultural knowledge into the education system, enabling future generations to draw from indigenous wisdom while embracing modern innovations. Reviving and reinterpreting Tamil philosophical traditions can foster a balanced approach to sustainability that respects both tradition and progress.

This paper emphasizes the need for policymakers, educators, and researchers to collaborate in incorporating Tamil cultural insights into curricula, promoting interdisciplinary research, and strengthening community engagement. By doing so, India can craft a development model that is not only economically and technologically advanced but also ethically and ecologically sustainable. A holistic approach that values cultural heritage as a foundation for sustainability will be instrumental in shaping a more equitable and resilient future for the nation.

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Women on Ancient Coins: A Study of Women Empowerment Through Indian Numismatics

Sakshi Mahamulkar

Introduction

"यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः।"[1]

As this Sanskrit verse suggests, India has been highlighting the important place of women in society since ancient times. As women empowerment becomes a key issue in modern India, we need to look into our history. Even today, various ancient texts from that time helps us to understand the contributions of women and provides ample evidences that women, during the early dawns of Indian civilization and Vedic period, were not subjected to gender discrimination and have equal status with men in all aspects of life. The earliest evidence of woman's position in the society is seen through the findings of the mother goddess and fertility cult worship from the Indus valley civilization. In later period also, many Indian womens, queens became an ideal image for the India Womenhood and still their coinage gives us a golden glimpse of Women empowerment.

Coins of Ancient Indian womens are truly valuable example of women power as a independent or a joint ruler on coinage. There are many Indian queens or empresses whose name are inscribed on ancient coins. These legendary 'Women on Coins' have left their mark on history and it will be a fascinating journey to learn more about them through their coinage, which is a most important and interesting part of Indian Numismatics!

1. Naganika

Alloyed copper, approx 7.11 gm.
Obverse: Pillar topped by an effigy of a Horse, with a vertical Brahmi inscription 'Naganikaya' on it, Brahmi legend beginning from the left of the horse 'Ragyo siri satakanisa'
Reverse: Depiction of Ujain symbol with Taurines in quadrants and Swastikas in orbs, within border.

Queen Nāganikā was the wife of the Satavahana king Satakarni I in the 1st century BCE. Naganika is considered to be the first queen in India to mint coins in her own name. An inscription from Naneghat mentions that Queen Naganika herself performed many sacrifices and donated some coins.

Her coins bear the name of Queen Naganika as 'Nāganikāya' and the name of King Satakarni as 'Rāgyō sirī sātakānīsa' in Brahmi script. At the same time, we see a horse engraved on the front side of this coin and due to that, it is estimated that this coin was made in the backdrop of the Ashwamedha Yagya. On the other hand, the Ujjaini symbol is engraved on the reverse side of this coin.

[1] Manusmriti, 3.56

2. Kumardevi

Gold Dinar, approx 7.69 gm.

Obverse: nimbate king, wearing a tunic and and holding standard, standing facing a nimbate queen, offering her an object. Brahmi legend 'Kumardevi' on the left and 'Chandra' below the standard.

Reverse: nimbate goddess seated on a lion, holding cornucopia in one hand and noose in the other. Bramhi legend 'Lichhawayah' to the right.

Kumāradēvī was the wife of Chandragupta I in the 4-century CE. Chandragupta I by marrying the Lichhavi princess Kumaradevi enhanced the power prestige and influence of newly established Gupta kingdom. Although Kumaradevi did not mint her own coins, but we see her depictions on Chandragupta's coins. This can be said to be a joint coin of these two.

The Chandragupta and Kumardevi coin, also known as the King Queen type coin are one of the most important coins of ancient India. These coins show that the Guptas gave special importance to Kumaradevi that is why her name is written along with Chandragupta I. Kumaradevi is the only Gupta queen with her name struck on the coins. The coins are made of gold, suggesting Kumaradevi brought valuable influence to her husband. Also to show gratitude towards her family because the legend Lichhavayah is also engraved in these coins.

Some scholars believed that these coins were issued by their son Samudragupta to commemorate his parents, but the later many scholars have attributed the issue of these coins to Chandragupta I

3. Prabhavati Gupta

Queen Prabhavati did not mint her own coins, but she did create clay seals bearing her name, which have been found in excavations. Therefore, this seal of hers is considered as important as a coin and needs to be mentioned here.

Prabhāvatīgupta was a Gupta princess and Vakataka queen who was the wife of Maharaja Rudrasena II in the 5th Century CE. She was the daughter of Chandragupta II (Vikramaditya) and also known as a prominent figure in ancient history, serving as the dowager queen and regent of the Vakataka Empire after the death of her husband. She was most powerful person of that time, great devotee of Lord Vishnu and also, she built some temples in Vidarbha part of Maharashtra during her reign as regent.

Her oval shape sealing bears the images of a 'Śaṅkhā' means conch and legend 'Śrīprabhāvatīguptāyaha' in brahmi charactere

4. Sungandha Devi
Copper coin, approx 6.12 gm
Obverse: King Standing facing front, performing sacrifice.
Reverse: Seated goddess facing front, wearing large earrings. Sharada letter 'Shri' on left and 'Sugandha' on right.

Sugandha Devi is the first known women ruler of Kashmir. She took over the kashmir reign after the death of her husband Shankarvarman and ruled in the state of Utpala for three years. Her reign lasted for a decade 905 to 907 CE, first as a regent and later on a sole ruler. She minted her own coins. The name of the queen is inscribed on these coins as 'Shri Sugandha Deva' in Sharada script and Goddess Lakshmi is also inscribed on these coins. The life and legacy of this queen is majestic, whose reign is often dubbed by historians as the 'golden era' for Kashmir.

5. Somala Devi
Copper jital, approx 1.15 gm
Obverse: Depiction of Stylized horseman riding to the right
Reverse: Devanagari legend 'Sri Somaladevi', partly visible.

Queen Somala Devi was a queen of the Chauhan (Chahamana) dynasty of Sakhambhari, Ajmer region, Rajasthan in the 12-13th century AD. She is also known as 'Somalekha Devi'.

She minted coins along with her husband, King Ajay Deva. Her copper coins have a horse rider on the obverse and the inscription 'Somaladevi' in the nagari script on the reverse. This queen also minted coins in silver, and an elephant is also seen on her some coins. Even after her death, coins continued to be minted with the legend 'sri somala devi', indicating her continued influence and popularity.

6. Rudrama Devi
Gold Kesari Varaha, approx 3.59 gm.
Obverse: depiction of double annulets and a crescent punch, four Lotus punches, two ‘Sri’ and ‘Ja’ in Kannada legend around the central Boar (Varaha), facing left. Legends are inscribed in Kannada language, it reads ‘Raaya Gaja Kesari’ meaning ‘Lion to the Elephant like enemies.
Reverse: Blank

The Kakatiya queen Rudramadevi of Warangal also minted her own coins. She ruled southern India from 1262 to 1289 AD. After the victory of Kakatiyas over Devagiri, Rudramadevi assumed the title of her father Ganapati Deva. The Kakatiya queen Rudramdevi was a great example who broke all the preconception and became the most known and able ruler of her times.

This queen minted gold pagoda and gadyana coins. Her coin is also known as 'Kesari Varaha'. Because these coins have the image of the animal 'Varaha' means Boar on the obverse and the inscription 'Raya Gajakesari' in Kannada script on the side. These coins are minted in the Ahata style and also these coins are uniface, meaning they have a design on only one side.

7. Didda Rani

Copper dracham, approx 6 gm

Obverse: King standing facing and sacrificing with his right hand over altar with 'Deva' in Sharada script.

Reverse: Seated Goddess facing front with legend 'Sri' on left and 'Didda' on right in Sharada script.

Didda Rani was a very intelligent and influential queen of Kashmir. She ruled from 980 CE until her death in 1003 CE as a regent and sole ruler for nearly 22 years. She is one of the very few female monarchs in Indian history. Clever, brave and physically disable queen of Kashmir, Didda Rani had an iron hold on her kingdom. she was also the most favoured wife of her husband king Kshemagupta Deva, but After her husband death, she acted as a regent queen for her son Abhimanyudeva.

Didda Rani also issued coins in her own name. it features highly stylized King in the standing position facing the sacrificing at altar towards left with legend on the right side in Sharada script, which reads ‘Deva’. The reverse of this coin depicts Goddess Lakshmi in a seated position (lalitasana) holding a diadem in right hand and a lotus in the left with ‘Sri Didda’ legend inscribed in Sharada script.

Even in the later period, many queens continued this legacy of women power. They minted their coins while ruling. In medieval India, queens like Yadav queen Kamaladevi, Nayaka queen Mangammal, Indo Greek queen Agathoclea, Kalliope, etc. also minted their own coins. Also, we can see the stamps or seals of some Maratha queens and silver coins minted by Ahilyadevi Holkar in the later period. This history of women empowerment, which started since ancient times, is not only long but also equally valuable and truly inspiring!

Conclusion

Numismatist is an important source for the construction of Ancient Indian History. These Coins of Ancient Indian queens provides us valuable information about the social, political, economic and cultural history of that time. This short overview of stories of these queens will give the necessary clues to women studies how women could and create her own path and counter patriarchal narratives. In today's world, when we talk about things like women empowerment or feminism, we should remember these inspirations from history. 'Womens are the nation's future' and our history has already shown that empowered women are the strength of a nation and we just need to learn from it. Not just these coins, but the entire history of these Indian womens should be kept in mind and we should move in that direction.

Ultimately, Our History has always been the enlightener of the nation and the society. Even today, it is the foundation of our present and the guide of our future!

Coins Photographs Courtesy: Oswal Auction, The British Museum, Deccan College Bulletin, Classical Numismatic Gallery and Author.

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प्रयाग स्तम्भ-अभिलेख से ज्ञात गुप्तकालीन संस्कृति

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भारतीय इतिहास जानने के स्त्रोत के रूप मे पुरातात्विक स्त्रोतों का महत्वपूर्ण स्थान है। पुरातात्विक स्त्रोत के अंतर्गत अभिलेखों की भूमिका सबसे महत्वपूर्ण होती है। अभिलेख विभिन्न राजाओं, राजवंशों, राजकीय कर्मचारियों अथवा कभी-कभी जनसाधारण द्वारा भी विशेष-विशेष अवसरों पर जारी किए गए जिनके अध्ययन से राजनीतिक, सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक, धार्मिक, आर्थिक एवं भौगोलिक महत्व की सूचनाओं के साथ ही साथ राजाओं की वंशावलि एवं तिथि संबंधी सूचना का ज्ञान भी प्राप्त होता है। प्रयाग स्तंभ-अभिलेख महान गुप्तवंशी सम्राट समुद्रगुप्त की उपलब्धियों पर प्रकाश डालता है। भारतीय इतिहास मे यह अभिलेख समुद्रगुप्त का ***इलाहाबाद स्तंभ लेख*** एवं ***प्रयाग-प्रशस्ति*** के नाम से भी प्रसिद्ध है। यह अभिलेख 35 फुट ऊंचे बलुआ पत्थर के स्तंभ पर 33 पंक्तियों मे उत्कीर्ण है। यह लेख जिस स्तंभ पर उत्कीर्ण है वह पहले कौशाम्बी मे स्थित था जिसे मुगल बादशाह अकबर अथवा जहांगीर के शासनकाल मे इलाहाबाद के किले मे स्थापित कराया गया। इस स्तंभ पर समुद्रगुप्त के लेख के अलावा मौर्यवंशी राजा अशोक का लेख एवं मुगल शासक जहांगीर का लेख भी उत्कीर्ण मिलता है। खास बात यह है कि जिस स्तंभ पर लेख लिखवाकर अशोक ने शांति एवं अहिंसा का संदेश जनता को दिया था उसी स्तंभ पर समुद्रगुप्त ने अपने विजय अभियानों को अंकित करवाया। इस अभिलेख की भाषा संस्कृत एवं लिपि गुप्तकालीन ब्राह्मी है। लेख की प्रकृति राजकीय है एवं लेख की विषयवस्तु है गुप्तवंशी शासक समुद्रगुप्त की उपलब्धियों का गुणगान अथवा प्रशंसा करना। यह लेख प्रशस्ति लेखन का सर्वोत्तम उदाहरण है एवं गद्य-पद्य मिश्रित अर्थात चंपू शैली मे लिखा गया है। यह लेख तिथिहीन है इसलिए विद्वानों के बीच इस बात को लेकर बहस है कि यह लेख समुद्रगुप्त के जीवन काल मे लिखा अथवा समुद्रगुप्त की मृत्यु के बाद लिखा गया। विद्वान जान फेदफुल फ्लीट महोदय इस लेख को समुद्रगुप्त की मृत्यु के बाद उसके उत्तराधिकारी चंद्रगुप्त द्वितीय विक्रमादित्य के शासनकाल मे जारी मानते हैं। फ्लीट का यह विचार प्रयाग-प्रशस्ति की पंक्ति 30 पर आधारित है जिसमे कहा गया है कि समुद्रगुप्त का यश विभिन्न मार्गो से संचारित होता हुआ तीनों लोकों को पवित्र करता है। उनका मानना है कि किसी व्यक्ति की कीर्ति तीनों लोकों मे उसकी मृत्यु के उपरांत ही प्रसारित होती है। फ्लीट महोदय के इस विचार के विपरीत व्यूलर महोदय इस लेख को समुद्रगुप्त के जीवनकाल से संबंधित मानते हैं जिसका समर्थन विद्वान राधाकुमुद मुखर्जी भी करते हैं। ये विद्वान यह मानते हैं कि लेख मे ऐसा कुछ भी नहीं कहा गया है कि इसे मरणोपरांत लेख माना जाए। चूंकि इस लेख मे अश्वमेघ यज्ञ की चर्चा नहीं है यही यह प्रमाण है कि यह लेख समुद्रगुप्त के जीवनकाल से संबंधित है। समुद्रगुप्त ने अश्वमेध किया था यह उसके अश्वमेध प्रकार के स्वर्ण सिक्कों एवं उत्तराधिकारियों के लेखों से प्रमाणित है। ऐसी दशा मे यह मानना कि लेख का रचनाकार हरिषेण अश्वमेध यज्ञ की सूचना देना भूल सकता है जहां कि वह समुद्रगुप्त से संबंधित छोटी-छोटी विजयों की बड़ी बारीकी से सूचना देता है, संभव नहीं लगता।

प्रयाग स्तंभ-अभिलेख ऐतिहासिक महत्व की दृष्टि से बड़ा ही महत्वपूर्ण लेख है जिससे राजनीतिक महत्व की सूचनाएं तो मिलती ही हैं साथ ही धार्मिक, सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं आर्थिक महत्व की सूचनाओं के साथ ही साथ समुद्रगुप्त तक के गुप्तराजाओं की वंशावलि का ज्ञान भी प्राप्त होता है जिसके अध्ययन से गुप्तकालीन संस्कृति पर पर्याप्त प्रकाश पड़ता है। लेख की पंक्ति 7 एवं 8 से ज्ञात होता है कि समुद्रगुप्त को उसके पिता ने अपने जीवनकाल मे ही राजा बना दिया था। जब भरे दरबार मे समुद्रगुप्त को उसके पिता ने राज्य प्रदान करते हुए कहा

कि तुम ही श्रेष्ठ हो और पृथ्वी का पालन करो तो सभासद प्रसन्न हो गए लेकिन तुल्यकुलजों के मुख म्लान हो गए जिससे संकेत मिलता है कि समुद्रगुप्त संभवतः अपने पिता का जेठा पुत्र न था लेकिन सबसे योग्य था इसलिए उत्तराधिकार के किसी युद्ध से बचने के लिए अपने जीवन काल मे ही उसके पिता ने उसे राजा बना दिया। इससे ज्ञात होता है कि तत्कालीन समाज मे योग्यता अथवा श्रेष्ठता को महत्व प्राप्त था और लोग श्रेष्ठता के आधार पर उच्च पदों पर पहुंच जाते थे यहां तक कि राज्य के उत्तराधिकारी अथवा राजा के चुनाव मे भी योग्यता को ध्यान दिया जाता था।

इस अभिलेख से समुद्रगुप्त के चार सैन्य अभियानों एवं कुछ विदेशी राज्यों से संबंध एवं नीतियों की जानकारी प्राप्त होती है जिनका विवरण निम्नलिखित है-

1. **आर्यावर्त का अभियान**- प्रयाग प्रशस्ति की पंक्ति 13-14 एवं पंक्ति 21 से इस अभियान पर प्रकाश पड़ता है। पंक्ति 13-14 मे चार राजाओं को समुद्रगुप्त द्वारा पराजित बताया गया है जबकि पंक्ति 21 से ज्ञात होता है कि समुद्रगुप्त ने आर्यावर्त के 9 राजाओं को पराजित किया तथा उनके प्रति ***प्रसभोद्धरणोद्भूत प्रभाव महत:*** की नीति अपनायी यानि पराजित राजाओं के राज्य को जड़ से उखाड़ फेंक कर अपने राज्य मे उनके राज्य को मिलाकर गुप्त साम्राज्य का विस्तार किया।

2. **दक्षिणापथ का अभियान**- प्रयाग-प्रशस्ति की पंक्ति 19-20 मे इस अभियान का उल्लेख मिलता है जिससे ज्ञात होता है कि समुद्रगुप्त ने दक्षिणापथ यानि दक्षिण भारत के 12 राजाओं को परास्त किया तथा उनके प्रति ***ग्रहणमोक्षानुग्रह*** की नीति अपनाई अर्थात राजाओं को पराजित करके बंदी बनाया तथा उन्हे मुक्त करके उनके ऊपर अनुग्रह यानि उपकार किया। कालिदास के रघुवंशम महाकाव्य मे इस प्रकार की विजय को धर्मविजय कहा गया है तथा इस नीति को धर्मविजय नीति कहा गया है।

3. **आटविक राज्यों की विजय**- प्रयाग प्रशस्ति की पंक्ति 21 मे आटविक यानि जंगली राज्यों को समुद्रगुप्त द्वारा पराजित बताया गया है इन आटविक राज्यों के प्रति समुद्रगुप्त की नीति थी- ***परिचारकीकृत*** यानि उन्हे सेवक बना लिया।

4. **पांच प्रत्यंत राज्यों एवं नौ गणराज्यों की विजय**- इस अभियान की जानकारी प्रयाग प्रशस्ति की पंक्ति 22 मे उल्लिखित है जिससे ज्ञात होता है कि इस अभियान मे समुद्रगुप्त ने 5 सीमांत या प्रत्यंत राज्यों और 9 गणराज्यों को परास्त किया तथा उनके प्रति ***सर्वकरदानआज्ञाकरण प्रणामागमन*** की नीति अपनायी अर्थात सभी करों को देना, राजा की आज्ञा मानना एवं समय-समय पर गुप्त दरबार मे उपस्थित होकर प्रणाम निवेदित करना।

5. **विदेशी राज्यों से संबंध**- प्रयाग प्रशस्ति की पंक्ति 23-24 मे कुछ विदेशी राज्यों से समुद्रगुप्त के संबंध की जानकारी मिलती है और ज्ञात होता है कि समुद्रगुप्त की विजयों से प्रभावित होकर अथवा डरकर कुछ विदेशी राज्यों जैसे दैवपुत्रषाहिषाहानुषाहि यानि कुषाणों, शकमुरुण्ड यानि शकों जो कि मुरुण्ड यानि स्वामी की उपाधि धारण करते थे एवं सिंहल यानि श्रीलंका आदि द्वीपों के राजाओं ने स्वयं ही अधीनता मान लिया। उनके प्रति समुद्रगुप्त की नीति थी -***आत्मनिवेदनकन्योपायनदानगरुत्मदंकस्वविषयभुक्तिशासनयाचना*** अर्थात इन राजाओं ने स्वयं ही आत्मसमर्पण करके निवेदन किया कि वह अपनी कन्याओं का विवाह गुप्त घराने मे करेंगे तथा अपने प्रांतों एवं जिलों मे गुप्तों के राजचिन्ह गरुड अंकित राजमुद्रा का प्रयोग करेंगे। इस प्रकार इन विजय अभियानों एवं विदेशी राज्यों से हुए संबंध से ज्ञात होता है कि गुप्तकाल मे शासन मे कई नीतियां प्रयोग मे लाई जाती थी। अलग-अलग क्षेत्र मे अलग-अलग नीतियों का राजा प्रयोग करता था साथ ही राजा की कृपा पाने अथवा उसके आक्रमण से राज्य को बचाने का एक माध्यम कन्याओं का विवाह भी था। दूसरे शब्दों मे शक्तिशाली व्यक्ति की कृपा पाने का एक माध्यम कन्याओं का उपहार अथवा दान भी था जो गुप्तकालीन समाज मे प्रचलित था।

प्रयाग स्तंभ लेख से गुप्त प्रशासन के कई महत्वपूर्ण प्रशासनिक पदों की जानकारी मिलती है जिनमे खाद्यटपाकिक, महादंडनायक, कुमारामात्य एवं सांधिविग्रहिक शामिल थे। लेख से ज्ञात होता है कि समुद्रगुप्त के समय मे एक ही व्यक्ति कई प्रशासनिक पदों पर विद्यमान होता था जो समाज मे सामंतवाद के बढ़ने एवं मजबूत होने का संकेत है। लेख का रचनाकार हरिषेण समुद्रगुप्त के प्रशासन मे सांधिविग्रहिक, कुमारामात्य एवं महादंडनायक के पद पर आसीन था। हरिषेण का पिता ध्रुवभूति भी खाद्यटपाकिक एवं महादंडनायक के पद पर था जबकि लेख का उत्कीर्णक तिलभट्टक भी महादंडनायक के पद पर आसीन था।

प्रयाग स्तंभ लेख आर्थिक महत्व की जानकारी भी प्रदान करता है। लेख से समुद्रगुप्त के तमाम सैन्य अभियानों की जानकारी मिलती है जो संकेत देता है कि गुप्तों के पास एक मजबूत सैनिक शक्ति थी जिसके बल पर समस्त सैन्य अभियान संचालित किए गए होंगे जिससे सहज ही स्पष्ट है उस समय राज्य की आर्थिक स्थिति बड़ी मजबूत रही होगी।

इस अभिलेख से समुद्रगुप्त तक के गुप्तराजाओं की वंशावलि का ज्ञान भी प्राप्त होता है जो कि पिता-पुत्र क्रम मे है। लेख से ज्ञात होता है कि समुद्रगुप्त महाराज श्रीगुप्त का प्रपौत्र, महाराज घटोत्कच का पौत्र, महाराजाधिराज चंद्रगुप्त का पुत्र, लिच्छविदौहित्र यानि लिच्छवियों की कन्या का पुत्र एवं महादेवी कुमारदेवी से उत्पन्न था। इससे स्पष्ट है कि गुप्तकाल मे प्रशासन की कई कोटियां विद्यमान थी। प्रायः अधीनस्थ शासक महाराज की उपाधि एवं स्वतंत्र शासक महाराजाधिराज की उपाधि धारण करते थे। स्वयं समुद्रगुप्त को लेख मे परमभागवत महाराजाधिराज कहा गया है जिससे लगता है कि समुद्रगुप्त के समय मे गुप्त पूरी प्रभुता के साथ स्थापित हो गए थे। लेख मे स्वयं को समुद्रगुप्त ने लिच्छविदौहित्र यानि लिच्छवियों की कन्या का पुत्र तथा अपनी माता महादेवी कुमारदेवी का भी उल्लेख किया है। इतिहास को ज्ञात है कि कुमारदेवी लिच्छवि राज्य की उत्तराधिकारिणी भी थीं और चंद्रगुप्त प्रथम से विवाह के उपरांत लिच्छवियों का राज्य भी गुप्तों को प्राप्त हो चुका था जिससे गुप्त मजबूत हो गए थे। इससे स्पष्ट है कि गुप्तकाल मे पिता के पुत्रहीन होने की स्थिति मे पुत्री को पिता की संपत्ति प्राप्त हो जाती थी यहां तक कि वह राज्य की उत्तराधिकारी भी हो सकती थी यह गुप्तकालीन समाज मे स्त्रियों की मजबूत स्थिति को दर्शाता है।

प्रयाग स्तम्भ-अभिलेख से धार्मिक महत्व की भी सूचनाएं प्राप्त होती हैं। लेख से ज्ञात होता है कि समुद्रगुप्त वैदिक धर्म के सूक्तमार्ग का अध्येता था। लेख मे उसकी तुलना तमाम देवताओं यथा कुबेर, वरुण, इंद्र एवं यम से की गई है जिसे लगता है कि गुप्तकालीन समाज मे ब्राह्मण धर्म का प्रसार था। राजा समुद्रगुप्त स्वयं ब्राह्मण धर्म का पालन करता था।

इस लेख से समुद्रगुप्त के व्यक्तिगत गुणों पर भी प्रकाश पड़ता है। लेख से पता चलता है कि समुद्रगुप्त एक विजेता होने के अलावा अन्य कई गुणों से भी युक्त था। वह दरिद्रों, दुखियों एवं असहायों की मदद करता था। इससे स्पष्ट है कि तत्कालीन शासक लोकहित को बड़ा महत्व देते थे तथा तमाम लोककल्याणकारी कार्य करते रहते थे। लेख मे कहा गया है कि पराक्रम मे समुद्रगुप्त कुबेर, वरुण, इंद्र एवं यम के समान था तथा संगीत कला के ज्ञान मे बृहस्पति, नारद एवं तुम्बुरु से बढ़कर था। उसकी रची कविताएं तमाम कवियों के लिए जीविका का साधन थी तथा कवियों के मध्य वह ***कविराज*** नाम से प्रसिद्ध था। इससे स्पष्ट है कि गुप्त काल मे राजा केवल पराक्रम यानि युद्ध मे ही नहीं रुचि लेते थे बल्कि सांस्कृतिक कार्यों मे भी उनकी रुचि होती थी। तत्कालीन समाज मे गीत-संगीत यानि सांस्कृतिक कार्यों का प्रचलन ही नहीं बल्कि विकास भी था और यह परंपरागत रूप से समाज मे सम्मान को प्राप्त था। लेख से ज्ञात होता है कि समुद्रगुप्त सैकड़ो युद्धों का विजेता था तथा उसके शरीर पर अनेक अस्त्र-शस्त्रों यथा परशु, बाण, बर्छी, शक्ति, भाला, तलवार, तोमर एवं नाराच आदि के निशान बने हुए

थे जो उसके शरीर की शोभा को बढ़ाते थे जिससे संकेत मिलता है कि तत्कालीन समाज मे लोग वीरता या शक्ति प्रदर्शन को सम्मान देते थे। वीरता प्रदर्शन गौरव की बात थी। लोग तमाम अस्त्र-शस्त्रों को चलाने मे दक्ष थे। इन अस्त्र शस्त्रों को निर्मित करने वाला वर्ग भी उन्नत दशा मे रहा होगा तथा इन अस्त्र शस्त्रों के प्रशिक्षकों का भी एक वर्ग रहा होगा जो सम्मान को प्राप्त होता रहा होगा।

लेख मे समुद्रगुप्त को सज्जनों के अभ्युदय का कारण एवं दुर्जनों के विनाश का कारण कहा गया है इससे संकेत मिलता है कि गुप्तकालीन समाज मे लोग सज्जनता एवं सज्जन लोगों का आदर करते थे तथा उनके सहयोग एवं रक्षा हेतु तत्पर रहते थे तथा दुर्जनों यानि दुष्टों को असम्मानित माना जाता था तथा राजा एवं अन्य प्रशासक दुष्टों को दंड देने यहां तक कि उनके विनाश के लिए भी तत्पर रहते थे।

लेख मे समुद्रगुप्त को शतसहस्त्र यानि लाखों गायों का दानकर्ता कहा गया है। इससे स्पष्ट है कि पशुपालन विशेषकर गोपालन को समाज मे सम्मान प्राप्त था जो कि आजीविका का भी एक साधन रहा होगा। साथ ही गाय एक मूल्यवान एवं महत्वपूर्ण पशु थी जिसे अवसर विशेष पर लोग दान भी देते थे।

प्रयाग स्तम्भ-अभिलेख गुप्त कालीन ब्राह्मी लिपि और संस्कृत भाषा मे गद्य पद्य मिश्रित अर्थात चंपू शैली मे उत्कीर्ण है। इससे स्पष्ट है कि गुप्त काल मे लेखन की एक प्रचलित परंपरा विद्यमान थी तथा लिपिकारों एवं उत्कीर्णकों का एक वर्ग समाज मे मौजूद था साथ ही संस्कृत भाषा का प्रचलन इस तरह था कि लोग गद्य एवं पद्य दोनों ही शैलियों मे तथा गद्य-पद्य की मिश्रित अर्थात चंपू शैली मे रचनाएं करते थे तथा गुप्तकालीन समाज मे इस भाषा के पढ़ने और पढ़ाने वालों का वर्ग पूरी तरह प्रतिष्ठित था ।

इस प्रकार उपर्युक्त विवेचन से स्पष्ट है कि प्रयाग स्तंभ-अभिलेख ऐतिहासिक महत्व की दृष्टि से बड़ा ही महत्वपूर्ण लेख है जिसके अध्ययन से गुप्तकालीन समाज एवं संस्कृति पर पर्याप्त प्रकाश पड़ता है।

संदर्भ-ग्रंथ

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Patachitra: A Reflection of Bengal's Cultural Heritage

Brishti Mitra

Introduction

The 'Paṭṭacitra' tradition is a unique folk-art form. It is an amalgamation of traditions of story-telling, painting, music, communication and awareness about socio-political and cultural situations. This craft is native to eastern Indian states like Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

Art forms in India have high aesthetic values. The skills of most of the art forms are passed down from generation to generation and not documented anywhere. Paṭṭacitra is one of them. Most of the folk arts depict diverse realities, mythologies and current happenings in their own ways. Paṭṭacitra uses vibrant natural dyes to depict the same stories and events on the scrolls or simple papers.

A unique tradition in the West Bengal category of Paṭṭacitra is that after the scrolls are painted, they are not exhibited simply but performed in front of the people accompanied with songs composed and sung by the painters themselves. These songs are called *Paṭer gān* (literally meaning songs of the scroll). Due to excessive commercialisation of Paṭṭacitra paintings in the recent decades, the *Paṭer gān* is being lost because of being non-profitable. People use Paṭṭacitra to decorate their walls but forget about the tradition of the song which makes it a unique folk-art form.

Review of Literature

A large chunk of literature used to complete this paper is from articles available from different journals.

The article by Dr. Lopamudra Bajpai has been really helpful in explaining the basics of the Paṭṭacitra art form. Dr. Lopamudra Bajpai is an Assistant Professor and a Visual Anthropologist at Symbiosis Institute of media and communication in Pune. Her main areas of research include folk and urban culture and communication, history and visual communication. Her work on Paṭṭacitra is an easy read and lucid interpretation of the tradition.

The article by Priyanka Basu is an equally efficient one whereby she has stated the current status of the art form and the artist, in a specific context of the pandemic years. She has very clearly reflected on the plight of the artists and the loss that the art suffered commercially as well as artistically.

The online material by 'Chitrapata' (Citrapaṭa) editorial on the official site of 'Chitrapata' is one on the Odisha style of Paṭṭacitra painting. However, it has drawn a line of difference between the regional variations of Paṭṭacitra, namely, of Bengal and Odisha in an excellent way.

Dr. Shyam Mondal's article has been instrumental in explaining theories related to language which give the Paṭṭacitra artists a unique identity. His article is good to understand not only Paṭṭacitra but a general theory of linguistic identity all over the world.

A brochure published by the Government of West Bengal was useful in the research work done for this paper.

Another important source was an article by Dr. Ankita Singh Rao, Assistant Professor at Poornima University, Jaipur Rajasthan. Her article has been very useful in understanding the Kālīghāṭ school of Paṭṭacitra paintings. It is important to note that the Kālīghāṭ school is the most evolved school of Paṭṭacitra and is important to understand the techniques of this school to trace the evolution of the art.

Kavita Singh's article in a Niyogi Books publication has stated how the artists are adapting to the changing themes in Paṭṭacitra, the involvement of women in the art and the concept of *"Nūtan Paṭ"* or the new themes in the art form.
Lastly, the official site of Victoria and Albert Museums have provided a bit of explanation about the styles of Kālīghāṭ painting. It also has excellent photographs of some Kālīghāṭ Paintings.

Methodology

This paper has been completed majorly with the help of secondary information found in articles and books. I had also visited an exhibition called "Daksha" on handicrafts in Bengal, put up by Banglanatak Dot Com, an NGO. Many aspects were clearly explained by the artists there through direct conversation. Mr. Ajay Patua, a resident of Birbhum, gave a brief idea about how the canvas and the dyes are prepared. An artist couple, Mr. Abdel Chitrakar and Mrs. Sayera Chitrakar, was kind enough to describe their journey from a village of West Bengal to a platform in the US to showcase their art. Mrs. Sayera also performed a *Paṭer gān* with a Rādhā Kṛṣṇa scroll at the "Daksha" exhibition. The information gained from available literature and a first-hand experience of viewing the art have contributed to the successful understanding of the theme and the completion of the paper.

Origin and Evluation

Paṭṭacitra was a dying art form even a few decades back. It is only recently that the Paṭṭacitra paintings, especially of Bengal have received a new push in the world market after receiving the GI tag in 2018 (Patachitra- Narrative Visuals). Surprisingly, this art form seems to have originated long time back and survived the test of time through ages and dynasties.

Image 1: Toraṇa at Sāñcī Stūpa with circular ends depicting scrolls.

It is tough to date the ancient Paṭas exactly. However, according to the themes depicted in these Paṭas, their time context can somehow be deduced. The art form had definitely originated in the pre- Pāla period as can be understood from the oldest Paṭas. The rudimentary form of Paṭas might have originated since the Harappan times as well (or at least 2500 years ago) and surprisingly still continues today (Mondal in IJAEM 2022, 184) in their evolved form. In some Buddhist literature, there is a reference to the term 'Paṭa' in 1st century AD (Mondal in IJAEM 2022, 184). The *toraṇas* of the Sāñcī Stūpa (Madhya Pradesh) probably depicts scrolls which unfold stories of Jātakas as they unfurl. However, it is often believed that the term has been derived from Sanskrit root words 'Paṭṭa', which a means a piece of cloth and 'citra' means painting. The painters of the Paṭas are called Paṭuās.

The Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa, which might have existed well in the 1st millennium CE, the versions of which were most probably composed in the Bengal region, give early references of people practising the art form. The text of Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa says that the artists or the Paṭuās are the descendants of the supreme artist god Viśvakarma and his wife Ghṛtācī. The Paṭuās were living among the ancient community of the Austro-

Asiatic people and later came to be known as 'Citrakāras' (Patachitra- Narrative Visuals). Nevertheless, most scholars have agreed that the art form had developed in the pre Pāla period and came to spotlight somewhat during the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries in the eastern parts of India.

The main thrust comes during the 12th century when the Jagannath Puri temple was decorated with Paṭṭacitra on its walls (Mondal in IJAEM 2022, 184). However, since we are concerned about the Bengal Paṭṭacitra, we need to find out the dates on the basis of it.

In spite of the art being an old form, almost 2500- to 3000-year-old, it is only in the 10th and 11th century Bengal that Paṭṭacitra as a profession was taken up. This is evident through various oral traditions and lore that float around in the Paṭuās community (Bajpai in IJHCS, 02). The Paṭuās as professional artists would go from house to house, especially the rich ones, of Zamīndārs and aristocrats, and perform their songs while exhibiting their scrolls or paṭas. They would be rewarded with money or kind, often gifts like clothes and grains. They were often invited to houses where some Pūjās took place. Just like a Bratakathā people would watch the performance with great piety, as if it were a part of the rituals. These Paṭas would often depict folklores or the stories or kāvya of goddesses like Manasā, Caṇḍī**,** Durgā and few more. Originally, the Paṭuās were supposed to perform only about a few specific goddesses. Gradually, their arena increased and socio-political issues came up with current events as well in the Paṭas and their songs (Bajpai in IJHCS, 02). This establishes the importance of the Paṭṭacitras and their performers in the religious spheres of the Bengal region. The Paṭṭacitras also depicted folklores and stories about kings and rulers which brought out the socio-political news of the time and other trends that were in vogue. In some way or the other, these Paṭuās were the source of communication during those times. They carried news and trends from one village to another, one household to another.

Image 2: **Manasā** Paṭa (Courtesy: National Museum, Delhi)

The Paṭuās, who were essentially men during the earlier times, themselves prepared the scrolls and paints, painted on them, composed the songs related to each Paṭa and sang them at different places.

The entire process was carried out by single families of Citrakāras. This art form continued in the same way mostly in the rural areas until the British intruded and the village economy was forced to kneel, the Zamīndārs lost their autonomy and the artists forced out of their cultural habitat to earn their living.

During the 19th century, a new school of Paṭṭacitra painting developed called the Kālīghāṭ school of Paṭṭacitra painting. The Kālīghāṭ school of Bengal Paṭṭacitras is the latest style in Paṭṭacitra painting having British influence. This developed in and around Kālīghāṭ in Kolkata. The Kālīghāṭ paintings were in fact made to be sold as painted souvenirs to be taken back with from the temple at Kālīghāṭ. Eventually other themes other than Goddess Kālī also got introduced in this style of Paṭṭacitra. They are however not narrative in nature and only contain one or two paintings instead of a 20 feet long scroll. This shift in the process of evolution, seen through the Kālīghāṭ School, was due to a lack of patronage, the fall in demand or time to listen to the original art form and migration of the rural population to urban centres like Kolkata from the nearby villages. They had to work to earn their living and the remainder time they had was used to paint these arts. They no longer made scrolls but used cheap paper that became easily available

in the market and was economically viable and less time consuming. The backgrounds in the paintings were no longer painted and left blank. The Paṭas eventually started depicting various themes other than religious ones in this style of paintings (Kalighat Painting: V&A website).

What actually caused the dying down of the art was lack of patronage. People now neither had time to enjoy the performances nor did they have money to patronise the artists. Hence, the Paṭuās had to disperse and find out jobs to sustain themselves. However, Paṭṭacitra received a major impetus in 2018 after getting a GI tag in Bengal. Still, the art form was not entirely appreciated since it was only the paintings that got a market and not the songs and the performances, mostly due to language barriers. The Paṭuās, as a cultural community, compose their songs in regional dialects of Bengali which often is not comprehensible to the outside world. In spite of a degradation, if we may say so, in the quality of the art form, the original art form, retaining its quality continues to be performed in some of the villages in Midnapore district of West Bengal, specifically, West Midnapore.

Making of the Paṭas

Originally, the Paṭas were made using clothes. Clay, cow-dung and some sticky element or natural glue is used on the cloth and kept to dry. This gives a good support to the paintings and provides a surface that is polished enough to paint on (Rao in SIMRJ 2019, 143). Sometimes, paper is woven together to make a scroll. references of palm leaves being used have also been found. The Odisha Paṭṭacitra shows more use of palm leaves.

Once the surface is prepared, the dyes are made ready with natural elements. According to Mr. Ajay Patua, an artist at the "Daksha" Exhibition, when he prepares dyes for his paintings, he uses girimāṭī (geru/ochre) to make red, khorīmāṭī (chalky-soil) to make white, leaves of flat beans to make green, aparājitā flower for peacock blue, lamp soot for black and so on[1].

In general, the colours that were used for such painting originally and are still used by artists who follow the original procedure are vegetable colours or natural dyes. These dyes are made of geographically available materials. A general list of materials used for making dyes can be made as: yellow from turmeric, green from leaves of bean or wood apple plants, blue from flowers like aparājitā, purple from blackberry or plum, white from chalky soil or conch dust, brown and red from ochre or vermillion or Āltā and so on. These colours are prepared in the shells of coconuts used as palettes and mixing bowls. The dusts and the pastes are mixed with *beler āṭhā* or glue made from wood apple trees and water to make dyes that can stay intact for longer times.

As the art form evolved, it took the form of Kālīghāṭ paintings where the quality of the raw material started degrading. Since there was lack of patronage, time and market for the art form, the artists found ways to make the paintings more economically viable. Since the 19th century onwards, the original procedure to make the scrolls was gradually disappearing, though not completely. The Kālīghāṭ painters started using cheap quality papers and cheap ready-made dyes easily available in the market. This degraded the quality and originality of the art. However, in the recent decades, the Paṭuās have received a lot of support from NGOs and returned to the old procedures of making Paṭas. Nevertheless, Kālīghāṭ school of Paṭṭacitra remains to be a degraded yet distinctive school of Paṭṭacitra painting. Once the canvas and the dyes are prepared, the artists make brushes out of squirrels' hair and go ahead with the following procedure to complete the paintings.

[1] Interview with Mr. Ajay Patua at the exhibition "Daksha" by Banglanatak Dot Com.

Image 3: Kālīghāṭ **Paṭa** of Kartikeya
©UttamChitrakar (Courtesy: The Bengal Craft)

Discussion

Once the painting is complete, the most unique characteristic of Bengal Paṭṭacitra performance needs to be focused on. The *Paṭer gān* or the songs that explain the narrative depicted in the Paṭas are composed by the Paṭuās themselves and performed while showing the Paṭas and gradually opening the scroll. There are three major parts of the *Paṭer gān*: a. the Kāhinī *or* the story; b. Māhātmya or the glory; c. Bhaṇitā or the self –introduction (Bajpai in IJHCS, 03). The artist thus adds a bit of personalisation to the songs towards the end of it where he sings his name and place and sometimes other details. The songs are generally sung in Tripad tāla, a kind of beat in Indian music. Originally, the songs were all vocal. Gradually, instruments like Ḍugḍugī or Ḍamaru and flute and even harmonium were used to accompany the performances (Bajpai in IJHCS, 03). As the paintings evolved, the songs gradually faded away. 19th century onwards, when the Kālīghāṭ paintings started gaining popularity, the songs were not sung anymore. The paintings were then made on single sheets of paper and not long scrolls. The paintings seemed to be quite self- explanatory. Hence the tradition of the *Paṭer gān* had started decaying since then itself. The gradual disappearance of *Paṭer gān* is still an issue that needs to be dealt with. While the Paṭṭacitra paintings have got a facelift in the world market, the songs have remained in darkness.

Image 4: Mr. Ajay Patua at the Daksha Exhibition with his Covid painting

According to the **Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa**, the artists are the descendants of Lord Viśvakarma and belong to Citrakāra community. A unique concept is that the Citrakāra community name does not depend on their religion. Mr. Ajay Patua says that it is only because of birth in a certain family that they adhere to a religion but that is not their identity. The only identity they have is that of an artist. Such communal harmony was not uncommon in India before the advent of the British. The **Paṭuās** entertained and educated the masses through their performances. People were highly interested in listening to the stories of the **Paṭuās**. Such performances held places of religious importance as well. The **Paṭuās** would make the **Paṭas**, compose the songs and travel to nearby villages to perform their art. As Mr. Ajay Patua says, the artists never demanded any specific amount of reward. They happily accepted whatever they received. Originally, it was only men who could be involved in the entire process[2]. Mr. Abed Chitrakar and Mrs. Sayera Chitrakar, an artist couple at the "Daksha" exhibition informed in a conversation that Mrs. Sayera had recently visited the USA to perform the art form[3]. This is where the evolution has taken place socially. Due to many probable reasons women were not allowed to make or perform the **Paṭṭacitra** for a long time in the past. However,

[2] Interview with Mr. Ajay Patua at the exhibition "Daksha" by Banglanatak Dot Com.
[3] Interview with Mr. Abed Chitrakar and Mrs. Sayera Chitrakar at the exhibition "Daksha" by Banglanatak Dot Com.

Paṭṭacitra artists also evolved along with the art itself and like in every field, women got exposure and have proven to be excellent painters, composers and performers of the art form, doing full justice to its originality. Therefore, it is not only the art that evolved but also the community of the artists which evolved over time to make it what it is today.

The themes of Paṭṭacitra paintings vary from mythological stories to political changes and socio-religious cultures. Throughout the evolution process of Paṭṭacitra, the themes also evolved gradually from mythological to political and social and the latest Paṭas that was displayed in the "Daksha" exhibition was on the Covid Pandemic, painted by Mr. Ajay Patua[4]. Therefore, it can easily be comprehended that the Paṭṭacitra art has evolved since its inception. As the times changed, the paintings changed their theme; they have always kept up with the times. Therefore, they can be used as important sources of history as well.

It is not only Hindu mythology that appears in the Paṭṭacitra. Mr. Ajay Patua had referred to folk tales related to Muslim Pīrs and Faqīrs often called the Gājī Paṭas. The Paṭuās often express through their body language while the performance called '*Paṭ khelānō'*. They play both good and bad characters, the masculine and the feminine characters. They often try voice modulations and hand gestures to complete their performance. In general, the categories of themes that appear in the Paṭṭacitra paintings and *Paṭer gān* are listed as chronologically:

a. Sections of various Indian religious texts and epics like the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata, the Bhagavadgītā and so on;
b. Depiction of mythologies and Purāṇas like Manasāmaṅgal, the Caṇḍīmaṅgal, Mahīṣāsuramardinī etc;
c. Local stories or folklores prevalent in different rural and urban cultures, like the depictions on the Yama Paṭa *;*
d. Stories of Hindu and Muslim saints like Caitanya, Gājī, Masnad-i-ʿālā, Satyapīr;
e. Important historical incidents like stories of freedom fighters like Bhagat Singh, Bagha Jatin, or hearing of cases in courts and so on;
f. Socio-economic events like floods, famine, epidemics or even pandemics;
g. Important world updates like the French Revolution, the attack on twin towers, killing of Osama bin Laden by the US forces, terrorism, global warming, pandemic and so on (Bajpai in IJHCS, 04).

As is evident from the chronology of themes listed above, the art has always kept up with time and world events. The sequential enlisting very well depicts the evolution in the themes of Paṭṭacitra paintings.

The Paṭṭacitra tradition in Bengal has got a recent facelift in the year 2018 when it received a GI Tag. Otherwise, the craft was on the verge of disappearance as has been discussed in the earlier sections of the paper. Other than the aforementioned reasons of lack of patronage and audience, there has been another major cause detrimental to the art form. The Paṭuās originally belonged to lower Hindu castes which had to face discrimination like all other lower Hindu castes in the past. This made them convert into Islam which they thought was more egalitarian. However, being converted Muslims and performing about Hindu religious stories and deities, they were not well accepted by the Muslim community as well. They then reconverted to Hinduism. The Hindus now were more hostile to them. This communal upheaval caused a lot of harm to the art form. Many of the artists today have two names- one Hindu and one Muslim. They celebrate the customs of both the religion. Despite cons, the pro of communal harmony appears in this

[4] Display at the exhibition "Daksha" by Banglanatak Dot Com at Kolkata.

community of artists. However, in spite of disturbances, the art survived (Singh in Indian Painting: The Lesser-known Traditions 2011, 65).

Many organisations like Banglanatak Dot Com have gone a long way to support these artists and the art form. Festivals like "Pot Maya" have drawn a huge foreign clientele for the products. The "Pot Maya" festival is "a 3-day art extravaganza organised by the artist community of Naya, Pingla" (Basu in South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies 2022, 1000). In the recent times, the paintings are no longer done only on the scrolls but are done to decorate items like fashion accessories, apparels, life items, furniture, jewellery and so on (Patachitra – Narrative Visuals). Artists are often invited abroad to perform their art as is the case with Mrs. Sayera Chitrakar, a Paṭṭacitra artist at the Daksha Exhibition. The theme pandals during different festivals like Durgā Pūjā choose Paṭṭacitra as their themes. Such acts often bring awareness among the masses about the indigenous art from.

Image 5: Pandal for Durgā Pūjā
©kolkatar. utsab and aniket.gh23
(Courtesy: Instagram)

However, the concern that remains is that the paintings have been able to gain a huge market worldwide but the Pater gaan has lagged. It has been so because of the issue of language barriers. Mr. Abdel Chitrakar at the Daksha Exhibition showed concerns towards the disappearance of the tradition of *Paṭer gān* and its detachment from the paintings. Nevertheless, NGOs like the Banglanatak Dot Com itself have been working hard to promote the art form in a wholesome manner with the *Paṭer gān* in different exhibitions and stage shows.

Conclusion:

It is very interesting to know an art form which is so versatile and multitasking. The Paṭṭacitra is sometimes referred to as an old and rudimentary form of motion pictures or animation. It involves painting, music and acting to perform the art in a wholesome manner. Right from the start of the process where the canvas and the dyes are prepared, it is a hundred per cent natural procedure, if followed traditionally. It had been and continues to be an important medium of infotainment to the larger masses in Bengal. The artists have continuously picked up contemporary themes to perform in Paṭ khelānō as has been mentioned throughout the paper. It is very engaging to know that at times when there was no radios or televisions or smart phones, the Paṭuās were doing an amazing job as a social media though their art.

Like every art form, the Paṭṭacitra also evolved in terms of its history, the process, the audience and the community that makes it. Most probably, its adaptability is one of the major reasons for the art to have continued to survive for 2500 years ago till date. Although the paintings have now been pulled out of danger, the oral tradition is still in danger and needs more concentration. Like in every other field, the colonial thought process has made us ignore our indigenous art forms. Likewise, the Paṭṭacitra art form, which is now famous worldwide, had also been ignored for a long time in the past.

However, similar to every other art form, the Paṭṭacitra, which is an excellent social media and can be considered as a tool to write history, must be admired and encouraged to stay alive.

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The Status of Women in Sanskrit Mahākāvyas: A Comprehensive Analysis of Gender Representation in the Pañca Mahākāvyas

Prachi Moghe

1. Introduction

Sanskrit *kāvya* represents the pinnacle of creative literature in classical India, demanding study through both literary aesthetics and historical context. The *Pañca Mahākāvyas* offer rich insights into the social, cultural, and religious norms that shaped ancient Indian civilization, particularly regarding gender dynamics and women's status in society.

These epic poems present diverse female characters ranging from powerful goddesses and rulers to virtuous wives and mothers, reflecting both the ideals and limitations of women's societal roles. While many women are depicted as paragons of virtue, strength, and wisdom, their agency is often circumscribed by familial and social expectations.

This research employs feminist literary criticism and gender analysis to examine textual representations of women across the five Mahākāvyas. The methodology involves close textual analysis of female characters, their roles, agency, and symbolic significance within each epic's narrative structure. The study also considers the socio-historical context in which these works were composed, analyzing how they reflect and potentially challenge contemporary gender norms.

The theoretical framework draws from gender studies scholarship that examines how literature both reflects and constructs social realities about women's status and roles in society.

Analysis of Female Representation in Individual Mahākāvyas

2.1 Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*: The Divine Feminine

In *Kumārasambhava*, Kālidāsa presents women as powerful and transformative figures who shape divine events. The epic primarily revolves around Pārvatī's pursuit of Śiva and their eventual union.

2.1.1 Pārvatī: The Ideal Divine Consort

Pārvatī emerges as the central female character, embodying multiple dimensions of feminine ideals:

1. **Symbol of Devotion and Purity**: Pārvatī's unwavering dedication to winning Śiva as her husband demonstrates idealized feminine devotion. Her spiritual purity, reflected through ascetic practices, represents women as embodiments of moral strength.
2. **Agency Through Asceticism**: Unlike passive feminine archetypes, Pārvatī actively pursues her goal through rigorous penance (*tapas*), demonstrating that feminine power operates through spiritual discipline and transformation.
3. **Divine Feminine Power (*Śakti*)**: As a goddess, Pārvatī transcends earthly limitations, commanding even the gods. Her ability to draw Śiva from his ascetic withdrawal illustrates feminine force as both subtle and transformative.

2.1.2 Supporting Female Characters

1. **Rati**: The wife of Kāma represents love's endurance and emotional depth, mourning her husband's destruction while influencing his resurrection.
2. **Gaṅgā**: Portrayed as an epitome of feminine grace and purity, reinforcing traditional ideals of women as embodiments of natural beauty.

2.2 Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṃśa*: Royal Women and Dynastic Continuity

Raghuvaṃśa presents women primarily through their relationships to the royal dynasty, emphasizing their roles in maintaining political and social stability.

2.2.1 Indumatī: The Paradigm of Royal Womanhood

Queen Indumatī exemplifies traditional feminine virtues:

1. **Devotion and Loyalty**: Her dedication to King Raghu represents the ideal of the devoted wife
2. **Motherhood and Dynastic Continuity**: Her role in producing heirs essential for dynastic succession
3. **Suffering and Sacrifice**: Her life trajectory embodies the theme of feminine endurance

2.2.3 Women of Rāma's Era

1. **Kaikeyī**: A complex character who influences royal succession, demonstrating women's indirect political power
2. **Kausalyā**: Embodies patience and righteousness during familial trials
3. **Sītā**: Though referenced rather than central, represents unwavering moral strength and sacrifice

2.3 Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya*: Women in the Heroic Narrative

In this male-centric epic focused on Arjuna's spiritual journey, women appear primarily in supporting roles that reinforce themes of dharma and heroic achievement.

2.3.1 Background Female Figures

1. **Draupadī**: Though not directly featured, her implied presence represents the stakes of Arjuna's victory and the strength of feminine dignity
2. **Urvaśī**: Symbolizes the theme of restraint over temptation, reinforcing dharmic values
3. **Pārvatī**: Present through her association with Śiva, representing divine feminine approval of heroic endeavors

2.3.2 Māgha's *Śiśupālavadha*: Women as Cultural Ornaments

This politically focused epic presents women primarily as background figures who enhance courtly grandeur while maintaining traditional roles.

Female Representation

1. **Rukmiṇī**: Krishna's consort symbolizes devotion, wisdom, and moral strength
2. **Draupadī**: Present as a symbol of royal dignity during Yudhiṣṭhira's sacrifice
3. **Courtly Women**: Depicted as mourners and cultural participants, emphasizing their emotional and ceremonial roles

2.3.4 Śrīharṣa's *Naishadhīyacaritam*: Female Agency and Choice

This epic provides the most nuanced portrayal of feminine agency, particularly through Damayantī's active role in the narrative.

2.3.1 Damayantī: Intelligence and Self-Determination

1. **Active Choice in Marriage**: Her role in arranging the *svayaṃvara* demonstrates women's agency in partner selection
2. **Intelligence and Resilience**: Her ability to overcome challenges through wit and strategic thinking

3. **Moral Strength**: Her steadfast devotion despite adversity exemplifies idealized feminine virtue

2.3.2 Female Messengers and Court Women

These characters demonstrate women's roles in diplomacy and cultural refinement, suggesting access to education and intellectual participation among elite women.

3. Thematic Analysis: Common Patterns and Variations

3.1 Marriage and Female Agency

The *svayaṃvara* tradition appears across multiple texts (Indumatī, Damayantī), suggesting that noble women possessed some autonomy in marriage choices, though within traditional frameworks. This represents a form of limited female agency that operates within patriarchal structures.

3.2 Devotion and Sacrifice

A consistent theme across all epics is the expectation of feminine devotion and sacrifice. Women's greatness is measured through loyalty, patience, and endurance of suffering, contrasting with male heroes celebrated for conquest and achievement.

3.3 Indirect Political Influence

While women rarely hold direct political power, they significantly influence political events through personal relationships and moral authority (Kaikeyī's role in Rāma's exile, Draupadī's influence on Arjuna's actions).

3.4 Intellectual and Cultural Participation

Elite women are consistently portrayed as educated, articulate, and culturally refined, indicating their participation in intellectual and diplomatic activities within aristocratic circles.

4. Gender Dynamics and Social Implications

4.1 The Concept of *Dampatī* (Ideal Couple)

These texts emphasize the complementary relationship between masculine and feminine principles, where couple goals transcend individual desires to serve larger cultural and divine purposes. This reflects a worldview where gender relations operate within cosmic and social harmony rather than individual fulfillment.

4.2 Economic and Political Structures

The texts reflect ideologies extending ownership concepts over both agricultural land and women's reproductive capacity (*kṣetra-bīja* analogy), revealing the intersection of gender with economic and caste structures in ancient Indian society.

4.3 Constraints and Opportunities

While women exercise influence through devotion, wisdom, and inspiration, their power remains largely indirect. The texts celebrate feminine strength within traditional expectations rather than challenging fundamental gender hierarchies.

5. Comparative Analysis and Conclusions

5.1 Spectrum of Female Representation

The *Pañca Mahākāvyas* present a spectrum of female representation:

1. **Most Agency**: *Naishadhīyacaritam* (Damayantī's active choices)

2. **Divine Power**: *Kumārasambhava* (Pārvatī's transformative influence)
3. **Political Influence**: *Raghuvaṃśa* (Kaikeyī's dynastic impact)
4. **Cultural Participation**: *Śiśupālavadha* (courtly women's roles)
5. **Supporting Roles**: *Kirātārjunīya* (women as moral anchors)

5.2 Dual Nature of Female Portrayal

These epics present women as simultaneously:

1. **Empowered**: intelligent, influential, and capable of shaping destiny
2. **Constrained**: bound by duties of devotion, purity, and sacrifice

5.3 Historical and Literary Significance

The Mahākāvyas reflect a complex gender dynamic where women were respected and influential within traditional frameworks, but their agency operated primarily through relationships with men and adherence to feminine virtues rather than independent authority.

6. Conclusion

The representation of women in the *Pañca Mahākāvyas* reveals a nuanced portrayal that both celebrates and constrains feminine power. While these texts do not present modern gender equality, they demonstrate women's significant influence within ancient Indian society's patriarchal framework. Female characters serve as catalysts for narrative development, moral exemplars, and symbols of cultural values, wielding power through devotion, wisdom, and emotional strength.

These works continue to offer valuable insights into the complexities of gender relations in classical Indian culture, presenting women as integral to social, political, and cosmic order while remaining within traditional role expectations. The enduring relevance of these characters suggests their importance in shaping cultural perceptions of femininity and continues to inform contemporary discussions about women's roles in society.

The *Mahākāvyas* thus provide a rich source for understanding the tension between idealized gender roles and women's actual agency in ancient Indian literature, offering both celebration of feminine virtues and implicit recognition of women's transformative power within traditional constraints.

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A Comprehensive Study of Wooden Temple Architecture: Focusing on Bhagwati Temple, and Sooryanarayan temple, Dhamapur

Purva Parab and Tamilaruvi Pari

Introduction

Ancient carpentry methods played a foundational role in the construction of wooden temple architecture, reflecting not only advanced engineering skills but also deep spiritual and cultural symbolism. Across various civilizations mostly in the region on Southern Maharashtra's Western Ghats and Kerala region built from wood demonstrate a profound understanding of natural materials, structural integrity, and aesthetic harmony. Craftsmen relied on intricate joinery techniques, such as mortise and tenon joints,interlocking brackets, often executed without the use of nails or metal fasteners. These methods allowed structures to endure seismic activity, climate changes, and centuries of use while maintaining their beauty and spiritual significance. The preservation of these techniques through oral traditions, guild practices, and detailed architecture. Today, the legacy of these methods continues to inspire modern architecture and conservation efforts, offering insight into the ingenuity and values of the past.

Literature Review:

Previous Works on Kerela Temple Architecture

Dr. K. V. Soundara R, Dr. K.V. Soundara Rajan's seminal work, *Temple Architecture in Kerala* (1974), co-authored with N.G. Unnithan, offers a comprehensive analysis of the unique architectural styles of Kerala's temples. Alongside more Research Scholars have analysed such as Dr. Chithra Madhavan, and T. G. S. Pillai

Previous Works on Konkan Temple Architecture

Smita Dalvi, Dr. G.B. Deglurkar

The architecture, design, and rituals of Kerala temples are deeply rooted in Indian spiritual traditions, particularly as outlined in classical texts and scriptures related to temple construction, sculpture, and worship.

Shilpa Shastra, Thachushastra, Tantra samuchayam, Vastu Shastra.

Objective and Methodology:

1. The goal of this study is to examine and analyse the traditional wooden temple architecture of the Bhagwati temple and Sooryanarayan Temple in Dhamapur, Taluka Malvan, Sindudurg District, located along the coastal belt of Maharashtra, India.
2. Focusing on the unique wooden and Laterite construction technology employed in these temples, the research delves into the materials, structural techniques, and aesthetic principles that define the region's sacred architecture.
3. The primary objective is to document the craftsmanship and construction methods, emphasizing the role of wood as the fundamental material in the construction process.

Historical Significance:

Vijayanagara Influence in Malwan Region: While the heart of the Vijayanagara Empire lies in present-day Karnataka, its architectural ethos permeated coastal Maharashtra, including the Malwan region. This influence is evident in the region's temple architecture.

Intricate Carvings: Most of the Temples in Malwan region were made of wood and Laterite stone. The features of the carvings in the wood and the roof style were somewhat

similar.

Architectural Features: Elements such as pillared halls and ornate entranceways, reminiscent of Vijayanagara temple designs, are present in Malwan's temples. These architectural traits not only signify the technical prowess of the era but also embody the cultural and religious syncretism that defined the region during the period.

Iconographic Influences in Malwan Region: The iconography within Malwan's temples reveals a blend of local and Vijayanagara traditions such as:

Deity Representations: Temples feature images of deities that are central to both local worship and the broader Vijayanagara religious practices. Deities such as Mahishasurmardini , Vishnu etc and the ornaments adorning by the deities. Style of holding attributes of individual deities.

Mythological Themes: Carvings often depict scenes from Hindu mythology, a hallmark of Vijayanagara art. Carvings of Lion, Tigers, Deities such as Hanumana, Ganesha, Garuda, Snake, Keertimukha, Lattice work, Delicate Flowers and Leaves around doorjambs.

Cultural Symbolism: Artistic motifs and symbols prevalent in the Vijayanagara Empire are integrated into the temple iconography, illustrating the region's cultural interconnectedness.

The Timeless Tale of Devi Bhagwati Temple: It is said by the villagers and priests that Devi Bhagwati once graciously lent gold to the locals for rituals, ceremonies, and weddings. However, when a villager stole a gold ring from the Devi's sacred Aabhushan, the once-flowing lake dried up in an instant. This marked the end of the holy tradition. Yet, with years of fervent prayers and annual rituals, the villagers humbly requested the Devi's forgiveness. In response, Devi Bhagwati, with divine grace, restored the precious waters to the lake of Dhamapur. Since that day, she has been revered as one of the most powerful and vigilant deities of Dhamapur village.

Geographical Location: The Konkan coast in Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra**,** the Malwan region unfolds as a captivating blend of sea, hills, and forest. Bordered by the Arabian Sea to the west and the rising slopes of the Western Ghats to the east, Malwan’s geography is shaped by a unique confluence of coastal and mountainous landscapes. **Kalse-Dhamapur** Village, Malvan Taluka, Sindudurg District, Maharashtra is home to Devi Bhagwati Mandir and Sooryanarayan Mandir. A sizable lake that spans **61 hectares** of land encircles the temple. This Lake is recognized as World Heritage Irrigation Site The natural beauty of the temple is enhanced by the lush forest that borders it.

Wooden Temple Architecture: Wooden temples, with their unique architectural styles and techniques, are found in various regions of India, reflecting the cultural, religious, and climatic adaptations of their respective areas.

1. Wooden temples often feature intricate carvings, with detailed wooden sculptures and paintings that enhance their beauty.
2. Use of Local wood is preferred according to the region.
3. Wood is a malleable material that can be carved, sculpted, and painted, which allows for extraordinary artistic expression. The aesthetic beauty of a wooden temple often comes from both the natural texture and color of the wood and the intricate carvings and paintings adorning the temple walls and interiors.

1. Devi Bhagwati Devi Temple Architecture:

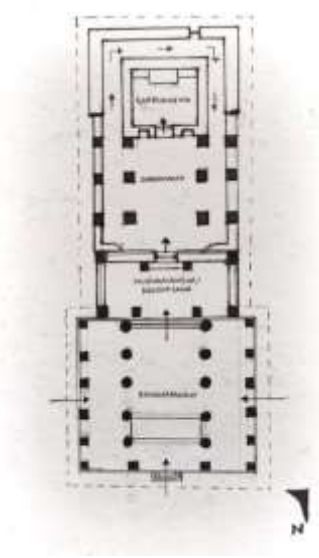
The temple’s distinct identities, however, are shaped by regional resources, cultural practices, and historical influences.

Bhagvati temple is a **Sandhara** in plan. This Temple consists spacious Rangamandapa, Rectangular Kakshasana, Sabhamandapa and Garbhagriha. The temple

has 10 main pillars in rangamandapa, 14 circular pillars surrounding by these 10 main pillars, kakshasana has 4 pillars and 4 Pillasters, the Sabhamandap has 6 pillars and 6 Pillasters. The temple has a back door inside the Pradakshina path. Temple is made up from Laterite stones, Timber wood and Terracotta roof tiles. Whereas, now some parts inside the temple have been renovated.

Wooden Pitched Roofnd some Joineries:

In this temple the timber roof structure is quite eye catching. The perfection in placements of the Timber Rafters and the joineries are styled precisely. This is rafter system in curved or arched support. The tenon is typically rectangular or square, and it fits into a hole (mortise) on the adjoining piece. This joinery of the angular support in another design seen outside the temple which is placed in the Soffit area of the structure.



The curve wooden rafters which fits into the mortise near the soffit area of the roof arranged precisely.

The above image showing the roof from inside of the Rangamandapa of Devi Bhagwati temple. Defining the deep steep of the roof, and intricate carvings of Deities.

2. Sooryanarayan Temple:

Sooryanarayana temple is a **Sandhara** in plan. This Temple consists a rectangular Kakshasana, small Sabhamandapa and Garbhagriha' which's internal Shikhara is of Phamsana Style. Temple is made up from Laterite, Timber wood. Terracotta Roof tiles. While the Phamsana-style temple architecture may not be as widespread as other temple styles in Maharashtra, it is still present in some areas of the Konkan and Malwan region.

The above image showing the Sooryanarayan Idol and related deities alongside the main deity idol.

The above image showing the ceiling of the Phamsana style sanctum, which is later renovated.

The above image showing the Sooryanarayan Temple Exterior View. Constructed in Laterite and wood.

Phamsana style sanctum inside the sabhamandap of the temple.

Sooryanarayan Temple is made of Laterite stone using lime as its mortar and previously cow dung flooring, which is now also been used by locals and rice paste for traditional designs made with fingertips. This sandhara temple has a separate garbhagriha having phamsana shikhar on the garbhagriha and two subshrines in Sabhamandapa. The icon of Sooryanarayan is precisely sculpted in black stone, holding two lotus flowers, conch and discus. And an old icon of sooryanarayan with serpent hood as his crown also an unidentified figure beside the main idol.

Wooden trusses have long played a crucial role in the structural design of traditional temples, particularly in regions with high rainfall and humid climates such as **Kerala**, **Konkan, Malwan**, and parts of **Northeast India**. A **truss** is a framework, typically triangular, used to support a roof by distributing its weight efficiently. **A wooden truss** is a framework of timber components, designed to support a roof or other structural load.

Role of Wooden Trusses

1. Support for the Roof
2. Spanning Large Areas

Types of Trusses

1. King Post Truss
2. Queen Post Truss
3. Fink Truss
4. Scissor Truss

In temple architecture, wooden trusses were developed with remarkable skill and aesthetic sensitivity. Timber**,** Teak and Jackfruit Tree Wood, being abundant and resilient in these regions, was the ideal material to span large spaces without the need for columns that could interrupt the sanctity or openness of the shrine's interior.

These trusses often consist of:

1. Principal rafters
2. Tie beams
3. King or queen posts
4. Struts and braces interlocked using traditional joinery techniques such as mortise-and-tenon, dovetail, or tongue-and-groove joints without the use of nails or metal fasteners.

In Kerala, for instance, wooden trusses support the iconic steep, sloping tiled roofs, designed to shed intense monsoon rains. In Malwan, similar techniques are seen, adapted to local climatic and material conditions. Traditional wooden trusses in temple construction were made using advanced joinery techniques, such as interlocking beams, wooden pegs, and mortise-and-tenon joints. These techniques provided strength and stability, ensuring the trusses could carry the weight of the roof and resist seismic forces. Beyond their structural function, these wooden trusses often feature decorative carvings and symbolic motifs, merging engineering with sacred art. They stand as a testament to the mastery of indigenous carpentry, balancing function, form, and spirituality.

Types of Wooden Joinery Inside Temples:

1. **Mortise and Tenon Joints (Mostly Commonly used):** It is a rectangular or square peg (tenon) fits into a matching hole (mortise). Used to join beams to pillars or truss members in the roof framework. Creates a solid but flexible joint that can expand or contract with temperature and humidity.
2. **Dovetail Joint:** It is a Fan-shaped interlocking fingers (like a dove’s tail). Often used in connecting frame corners e.g., shrine enclosures or wooden ceilings. Very strong; resists pulling apart due to tension or gravity.
3. **Tongue and Grove:** It is a "tongue" on one piece of wood fits snugly into a groove on another. Used in wooden ceiling panels or wall planks, keeping them aligned and seamless. Provides a tight seal which is ideal in humid climates to reduce water seepage.
4. **Lap Joint:** It is two wooden members overlap and are notched halfway to fit flush. Often found in cross beams and bracing structures. Distributes load evenly and allows parts.
5. **Scarf Joints:** Two beams joined end-to-end with a sloped or interlocking cut. Used when timber lengths were too short—extended rafters or long ceiling beams. Maintains structural integrity over longer spans.

Cultural and Spiritual Aspect:

1. **Nature-Respecting**: Wood was often chosen, cut, and joined **ritually** ensuring that every joint aligned with cosmic order (*vastu shastra*).
2. **No Metal**: The avoidance of iron (especially near sanctums) was both spiritual (metal was seen as impure) and practical (wood and iron expand differently).

Mostly these joints are used in **Sanctum ceilings** which are richly carved coffered ceilings, supported with tongue-and-groove and dovetail joints. **Mandapas (pillared halls)**: Large wooden beams resting on stone or wooden columns with mortise and tenon joints. **Roof trusses** the entire roof systems with angled braces and rafters tied by cross-lap and king-post joinery. **Doors and doorframes** which are beautifully crafted with interlocking frame joinery—often resistant to warping or humidity. Wooden joinery helped temples **survive heavy monsoons**, **resist earthquakes**, and **last for centuries**. Unlike nails, which rust and damage wood, these joints could **expand and contract naturally**, making them a perfect response to tropical climates like those in **Kerala and coastal Maharashtra (Malwan)**.

Kerala Temples: Kerala temple architecture is renowned for its intricate and unique use of wood, reflecting both functional and aesthetic aspects. Wooden temples in Kerala, known for their distinctive architecture, are primarily constructed following principles derived from Thachu Shastra, a traditional architectural science of Kerala.

1. Similar Types of Kerala Temples which resembles the cultural and Architectural significance of the Temples.

1. Vadakkunnathan Temple, Thrissur
2. Ettumanoor Mahadeva Temple, Kottayam
3. Chottanikkara Bhagavati Temple

2. Similar Types of Malvan Temples which resembles the cultural and Architectural significance of the Temples.

1. Lakshmi narayan temple, Walaval
2. Ravalnath mandir, Dhamapur
3. Mauli mandir, Walaval, Chendvan
4. Shree dev Kaleshwar Mandir, Nerur

Similarities Between Kerala and Konkan Wooden Temples

1. **Abundant Use of Timber**
2. **Sloping Roofs**
3. **Carpentry Traditions**
4. **Temple Layout:** The sanctum sanctorum (*garbhagriha*), often made of wood, is the focal point of the temple in both regions, surrounded by corridors and halls.
5. **Natural Integration**

Differences Between Kerala and Konkan Wooden Temples

1. **Regional Style**
2. **Materials and Ornamentation**
3. **Cultural Influences**
4. **Roof Structure**

Conclusion

The study of the **Devi Bhagavati Temple and the adjacent Sooryanarayan Temple in Kalse, Dhamapur**, reveals a rich yet underexplored chapter of western coastal temple architecture. These temples, rooted in the cultural soil of Malwan and nourished by the Konkan's syncretic traditions, showcase a distinctive architectural language that resonates strongly with the principles found in **Kerala's wooden temple architecture**.

Both temples demonstrate an ingenious adaptation to **climatic conditions**, with steeply sloping roofs, intricately carved wooden ceilings, and structural elements built using **traditional wooden joinery techniques** such as mortise-and-tenon joints and interlocking trusses that echo the craftsmanship of Kerala's Sthapatis. The use of **locally available timber**, the harmonious scale of structures in relation to the natural landscape, and the spiritual sanctity embodied in their spatial layouts point to a shared coastal vernacular born of monsoon resilience, aesthetic subtlety, and religious devotion.

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Gormati Embroidery: An ancient art of India

Shriram Pawar

Introduction

India's diverse cultural heritage is reflected in its numerous handicrafts, with embroidery standing out as a significant artistic expression. Among these, Gormati embroidery, practiced by the Gormati people, also known as Laman, Lambani, or Banjaras, holds a unique place. This embroidery is not merely a decorative craft but a historical narrative woven with threads, stitches, and motifs that date back thousands of years. The Gormati people, traditionally traders and nomads, carried their artistic traditions across vast regions, influencing textile arts in multiple cultures.

This paper examines the ancient roots of Gormati embroidery, drawing connections to Indus Valley Civilization. references in Rigveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda that describe the existence of textile arts and trade networks operated by this community which needs to study in details. The motifs, stitches, and techniques used in this embroidery reflect the knowledge and traditions passed down through generations. Furthermore, the socio-cultural significance of embroidery in Gormati ethics, principles and values particularly its role in women's life as education, social status, and marriage customs, will be explored. By understanding the past and present of Gormati embroidery, we can appreciate its role in preserving a unique identity amidst changing times.

Who are the Gor/Gormati?

India is a nation renowned for its diverse ethnic groups and rich cultural heritage. Among these, the Gor/Gormati (Gormati) stand out due to their distinctive traditional attire and independent identity. The nomadic Gormati seen today once lived a prosperous and glorious life. Similarly, they were known as a wealthy and affluent community across India once upon a time.

The Gor/ Gormati also known as Laman, Lamani, Lambada, Lambani, Lambadi are a distinguished and ancient people who have preserved a unique way of life based on scientific understanding and universal wisdom. Their lifestyle, shaped by centuries of trial and error, is designed to promote happiness, health, and longevity. This self-sustainable system is deeply rooted in their traditions, culture, language, attire, and dietary practices, all of which work in harmony to ensure their well-being and survival. The Gormati refer to themselves as "Gor," distinguishing themselves from others, whom they call "Kor." Their system of living, which supports a lifespan of up to 100 years. The *Tandho* system, central to their way of life, is self-sustaining and includes unique elements such as language, cultural practices, costumes, hairstyles, and dietary customs.

For centuries, the Gormati relied on long-distance supply caravans to navigate regions without roads or railways. Their extensive trade networks reached their peak during the Mughal Empire, with a single Naik (chief) leading up to 180,000 pack bullocks. After independence, the Gor/Gormati community is classified differently across Indian states and Union Territories, ranging from Open to OBC, SC, and ST, depending on local legislation.

These people were known by different names in Vaidic period like, Gour/Gor/Gourya, Pani, Yatumatis and Mrudhravachah. Gour/Gor/Gourya showing following richas are found in different mandal of Rigved.

स्वादोरित्था विषूवतो॒ मध्वः पिबंति गौर्यैः ।

या इंद्रेण सया-वरीवृष्णा मदंति शोभसे वस्वीरनुं स्वराज्यं ॥१०॥६॥ (१.८५.१०) (Maxmuller vol. I,1890 ,516)

अत्राह गोरमन्वत नाम त्वष्टुरपीच्यँ । इत्था चंद्रमसो गृहे ॥ १५॥७॥(१.८५.१५) (Maxmuller vol. I,1890 ,517)

नू चित्त भैषते जनो न रैवन्मनो यो अस्य गोरमाविवासात् । यज्ञेर्य इंद्रे दधते दुवांसि क्षयत राप ऋतपा ऋतेजाः ॥६॥ (७.२०.६) (Maxmuller vol. III,1892,114)

गोर्मायुरदादजमायुरदत्पृक्षिरदागरितो नो वसूनि । गवाँ मंडूका ददतः शतानि सहस्रसावे प्र तिरंत आयु ॥ १०॥ (७.१०३.१०) (Maxmuller vol. III,1892,281)

इह त्वा गोपरीणसा महे मँदंतु राधसे । सरौं गौरो यथा पिब ॥२४॥ (८.४५.२४) (Maxmuller vol. III,1892,500)

पर्वते हर्यतो हरिर्गुणानो जमदग्निना । हिन्वानो गोरधि त्वचि ॥२५॥ (९.६५.२५) (Maxmuller vol. III,1892,754)

According to Sayanacharya 'Pani' in Rigveda means Vanija and Lubdhaka, while according to Yask, Pani: Vanik Bhavati means merchant. This merchant class used to trade in cotton embroidered cloth, pearls, oysters, leather, diamonds, and rubies. Arya Rishi prays to Agni God that all the things used by these Pani people, gold, silver, precious metal, palasa wood, and heavy bull, may be obtained by us. This gives an idea of how glorious Pani was. The glory of Pani is described in Rigveda verses 1.124.10, 4.51.3.

उच्छन्तर्तीद्य चितयन्त भाजानाधादयायाषसा मघानीः। अचित्र अन्तः पणयः ससन्त्वबुध्यमानास्तमसा विमध्य ॥३॥ (Maxmuller vol. II,1890,553)

प्र बोधयोषः पृणतो मघोन्यबुध्यमानाः पणयः ससंतु । रेवदुच्छ मघवनो मघोनि रेवत्स्तोत्रे सूनृते जारयँती ॥१०॥ (Maxmuller vol. II,1890,754)

Yatumatis are described as amassing wealth by lying. In richa 1.189.7,10.87.13 described about the Yatumati who worships the bull and lives in Vailasthan of the Rigveda (Yatu = constantly moving; Mati = body, i.e. constantly moving human beings i.e. today's Gormati.

In the Rigveda they are called "Mrudhravachah'. Sayana gives the meaning of 'Mutravachah' as 'Hinsit Vagidriyan' meaning having a cut tongue. Instead of doing so, modern scholars have interpreted it to mean that he is a talker. (P.R. Deshmukh Advocate 1966, 61)

Gormati language is a primitive language, very clear, having two and three-letter words, abundant in language, while Sanskrit has very lengthy words. Pani in the Rigveda is evident from today's Gormati due to the language of Pani in the dialogue between Sarma and Pani (10.108.1-10). (Dr.Shriram S.P 2004,11)

Even today this community people speak the same language. Since ancient times, they have been trading on thousands of packed bullocks. As described in 21st topic and 6th rucha of Yajurveda

त्रामाणं पृथिवी द्यामनेहसां सुशर्माणमदिती सुप्रणितीम ।

दैवी नावों स्वरित्राम नागसम स्रवन्तिमा रूहेमा स्वस्तये ॥६॥ (Dr. Tulsi Ram.701)

Visvedeva, who has the quality of immortality day and night, who is of great excellent form, Trishup Chhanda and Bharavahi Vrishabha, were worshiped and established the life force in the Yajmana. (Dr. Raja Bahadur Pandey, 1996,117) Further it is described in 22nd chapter and 7h rucha of Yajurveda as May the Kshatriyas be great charioteers, skilled in archery, brave, may the cows give milk, may the bulls be strong and load-bearing and swift, may the women be endowed with all virtues and may the horses bow down quickly. May the charioteer be victorious. May the host's sons be young and brave. May the clouds rain on being wished for. May the medicines bear ripe fruits. May we be blessed with prosperity. (Dr. Raja Bahadur Pandey, 1996,122)

In the 15th sukta of the 3rd kanda of Atharvaveda, information is given about the traders, in the 1st sukta, the mukhiya / chieftain of the traders is mentioned and, in the

2nd, sukta, it is said that the traders travel to many countries by making their way through water, air and land.

इन्द्रंमहं वणिजं चोदयामि स न ऐतुं पुरता नौ अस्तु । नुदन्नरातिं परिपन्थिनं मृगं स ईशानो धन्दा अस्तु महाम् ॥१॥

ये पन्थानो बहवतो देवयानां अन्तरा द्यावापृथिवी संचरन्ति । ते मा जुषन्तं पयसा घृतेन यथा क्रीत्वा धनमाहरणि ॥२॥ (Dr. Tulsi Ram,187)

After the Indus period, the Gormati peoples are known by different names like Gor,Gourya,Pani, Yatumati, Merudhrawaach by the Vedic people, as they feel about these people. Even today, the same thing is happening with the Gormati people, using different names like Banjara, lamani, lambadi, lambani, sugali, but the fact is that these people call themselves Gormati.

The Richas described in Rigved, Yejurved and Atharved shows that Panis, Yatumatis and Mrudhrawach, people are gormati peoples doing trading on Packed Bullock caravans (ladeni). Which is described as Bharwahi, shighragamanshil bullocks and bulls in Yajurved while Leader of Trader (Nayek) who were trading by land route, Sea route described in Atharveda .

“However, the Banjara people have many similarities with the enemy of Arya as described in Richa, some of the similarities are given below:

(1) Banjara society is outside Vedic ethos and Chaturvarna.

(2) Like the Pani community, they are pastoralists and mainly traders.

(3) Like the Panis, they are Shaktists and worshipers of Shiva. Their Deoghamchi is very similar to Pani's Deodharma. Their main deity is Goddess 'Marymay'. They are also worshipers of Shiva. They call Shiva 'Shivabhaya'. Arya's enemies were also worshipers of Rushab. Banjaras are also mainly worshipers of Vrisbha. There was a deity called 'Sita' who followed Panis. Even the Aryas have assimilated her and composed hymns in her praise. Goddess 'Mita' is praised in Richa 6 and 7 of the 57th Sukta of the 4th Mandal of the Rigveda. Banjara also has a guardian deity named "Hita Diya". "Hita Diya” It is obvious that Sita Devi is a Sanskrit form.

(4) One of the clay mudras excavated at Harappa shows a naked deity with head down on one side and legs up, feet apart. A tree is shown emerging from her womb. The second side shows a woman sitting. Her hands are raised in prayer. Nearby is a man with a sword like a koyta. This image is believed to be of a human sacrifice offered to the earth god. It is believed that narvali was given in Sidhu culture. Banjara caste also had a more recent practice of human sacrifice.

(5) People of Sidhu-culture are similar to Banjaras in belief in witchcraft and ghosts.

(6) Freedom in the behaviour of women is similar in both societies” (P.R. Deshmukh Advocate 1966, 154)

Even today, the pieces of evidences of the Indus period are prevalent in this community. The names of women embroiderers in Yajurveda were Raka, Sakari, Meghi, Chapali, Revati, while in Vedic times men's names were Vala, Bhoja, Soma, Babaru, Jeta, Rekha, Jema these names are prevalent in this community. Banjara old women refer to themselves as "M Harappani" (म हारपणी) meaning powerful. Lots of remnants of the Indus civilization are scattered in language, cultural practices, costumes, hairstyles, and dietary customs of the Gormati people today after six thousand years.

In modern times, the Gor/Gormati people are often mistakenly identified as Banjaras. However, in reality, Banjaras are followers of the Gor/Gormati tradition rather than a distinct ethnic group.

The Banjara is a diverse group of people belonging to various communities, including Banjari, Kachkiwale Banjara, Navi Banjara, Jogi Banjara, Sanar Banjara,

Labhan, Labhane, Mathura Labhan, Dhadi, Dhaaliya, and other artisanal communities. They were historically associated with the caravans of packed bullocks owned by the Gormati people. Due to their involvement in these caravans, they came to be collectively referred to as *Banjara* by others. These people play various important roles within their communities, serving as entertainers, storytellers, singers, messengers, soldiers, and artisans. They have historically contributed to the maintenance and operation of large caravans, which often consisted of thousands of pack bullocks. These caravans were traditionally led by a chieftain known as the *Nayek*. This nomadic way of life played a significant role in trade, communication, and cultural exchange across regions.

Gormati Kasido/Bharatkam (Embroidery)

In the cultural vault that is India some embroideries were made for royal patronage, destined to be given and re-given at court to solicit favor or obligation; there are embroideries made as items of trade, intended for the foreign markets in Arabia and later Europe, and there are folk embroideries made for domestic use, functional or ceremonial and ornamented through a needleworker's skill to please the eye and lift the spirit. Banjara work is folk embroidery. The fierce pride of the Banjara is also expressed in their stitch work. A sense of this attitude may be found in an encounter between a few Banjara women from Madhya Pradesh and a group of missionaries: Some fifty years ago [c. 1920] a group of European missionaries wanted a band of Banjaras to settle down and send the young girls to mission schools. The Banjaras maintained that their girls had no need of reading and writing and asked what else the missionaries could teach them to help them to make good wives. The missionaries replied that they taught needlework - it should be mentioned that the needlework taught in missionary institutes in India had attained a high reputation. The Banjaras promptly demanded to see a few specimens of such work and, after inspecting them carefully, turned down the offer, stating that with such unskillful work no Banjara girl could ever hope to find a husband. (Charlotte Kown and Tim McLaughlin 2016,90)

In numerous societies, dress is worn according to prescribed social customs which embody community beliefs and identity. For the initiated, those who know how to read the clues, appearance functions as a complex language. Information about a person's origins, social and marital status, and even occupation can be communicated at a glance. (Victoria Z Rivers 1999,1) In the same way, this community has beliefs and identity.

The Gormati community has its customs, language, values, and handicrafts, characterized by intricate embroidery with unique stitching patterns and color schemes. Embroidery was essential for women, and those lacking the skill faced social stigma. Girls were trained in embroidery from a young age, becoming proficient by the time they reached 20. A bride’s finest embroidered work was sent to the groom’s Tandho, where its quality and motifs were evaluated to determine her skill and worthiness. Acceptance of marriage often depended on this assessment. As part of her dowry, the maternal and fraternal grandmother gifted her granddaughter a gold needle, symbolizing the importance of embroidery in her life. Historically, it was made only for personal use but it has recently shifted its nature to that of an item of trade.

5th day After the birth of a child, there is a ritual named Jalwa dhokayero for male and female children, in this ritual, there is a prayer to the fertile mother goddess. For babies, they prey as

वेणमाता हांसती हांसती आयेस
रोती रोती जायेस वेणमाता

सुवोसुतळी लेन वर आयेस
सुईदोरा लेन परं जायेस
वेणमाता ढेरो लेन वरं आयेस
लेपो लावण लेन परं जायेस
वेणमाता बाळानं पानेफुलेमं रकाडेस
वेण माता सेनं सायी वेस ये वेणमाता

This shows the importance of needles in the life of women. This craft is believed to enhance mental development, numeracy, color balance, proportion, and even eyesight. Gormati embroidery is distinctive in its structured yet improvisational approach. The use of stitch, motif, pattern, and color is so ingrained that an artisan can leave her work unfinished, and another can seamlessly continue in the same style without instruction. This embroidery is not just an art form but also a means of storytelling, preserving cultural narratives, and adapting to contemporary themes such as peace, harmony, and rural women's issues.

There are numerous songs regarding needles, embroidery, and stitches. Dhavalo is a kind of song which teaches proper behavior of the bride with newly formed nine relations after the wedding. Dhavalo sung by the bride during the wedding ceremony. words are different as per the ceremony and events, she sang a song while saying her emotions and feelings while crying as

सिक द सिकतडीरा लोल
तारी सीके बांधू बापू छेडा छेवटीयो गांठ
सुयीरे नाकेमयीन निकळीयुं
रांगो नवं जू नवीयुं,
सोनो तपं जू तपियु
तोभी तारी नायेकीनं वळमो
कोनी आये दू नायेक बापू

In the wedding tradition, all the women in the family bathe the bride on her wedding day. During this ritual, the bride covers her face with her hands and sings while crying. This is called Dhawalo. In this, she tearfully reminisces about all her memories from childhood to the present.

चार येत चोडो वीरा
चार येत लांबो वीरा
पिडिया घडलार लोल
पिडीयाप बेसं बायीये
कसीदो काडतीयेरा लोल
देक देक कसीदेन याडी
याडी झुरतीयेरा लोल

She says, "I used to sit on the four-legged wooden seat (Chaurang Pat) and do embroidery. When my mother looks at this seat, she will yearn for me."

Further references are found in the Holi geed as follows

वूठ परभाती न केकडा ये छोडी
कांदळीया मारोये कान
हावं हावं ये कांदळीया मारो ये कान
माने मनावतू लागली घणी वेळा
केकडा घे बगदान
हावं हावं केकडा गे बगदान
दाडो उंदाळो चयेतीरो मिना
तावढो लागेचं वडफुल बेसनभर
मालजादणी वडफुल बेसन भर

धीरो धीरो चाल झणकी गरदी वडचये
येके पिसारो झणकी भूगढा दरायेदूं
खाये तू खरावतू होटो फरियो झणकी चलीया
मतरेती झणकी चलीया
दोहेरी कलेणी घालीयो
झणकी चलीया
ठेपेती झणकी चलीया
कलेणी तो घाली वतं कटा कोणी मोडी ये
कायीं हूंसेती माकी तोडी ये झणकी चलीया

Gormati embroidery is deeply rooted in cultural, ritualistic, and religious traditions. The importance of needles, stitches, and embroidery is reflected in their songs, riddles, and daily life. In one riddle from a traditional entertainment game played by boys and girls, one participant asks:

आवडीक छपनी छप छप करं
सो रपीयारो बेपार भरं

The other participant must identify the object and answer. The answer to this riddle is "needle," indicating the existence of a trade in embroidered cloths. All embroidery was handcrafted by the women of the Tanda, and it was considered a social expectation that every woman must know embroidery. Not knowing embroidery was regarded as a social taboo.

In earlier times, women followed a strict code of conduct known as Ghungat, which dictated their interactions with men. They remained veiled in the presence of elders and unrelated males and rarely left their tandho (residential area) without a male escort. Within these confines, they created exquisite embroidered items, including dowry pieces, personal belongings, and garments, using deshi (handmade) mirrors and intricate stitches.

Gormati craft involves various artisans: weavers (Koshthi), dyers (Rangara), metal artists (Bharawa), and smiths (Sanar/Smith). Weavers produce coarse cotton fabric, dyers use block printing and tie-dye techniques, Bharawa craft zinc embellishments, and goldsmiths create jewelry reflecting community motifs.

This embroidery is renowned for its bold, intricate designs and distinctive needlework. Mirror-inset embroidery has gained popularity ethnically, incorporating small mirrors secured with colorful cotton, wool, and silk threads. The artisans never use machines, instead tearing fabric by hand and sickle and working with a simple household needle. Designs are created directly on fabric from memory, following a unique measurement system. The embroidery is labor-intensive, covering entire surfaces with densely stitched patterns. The quality is so high that "stitches outlive the cloth on which they are sewn."

One of the most important embroidered garments is the kachali (back blouse), featuring large deshi mirrors on the front. Dowry items such as Padrero wes, khalchi, kotali, gala, gadi, baglus, aadcheda, and chewtiya serve as markers of age, marital status, and geographic origin. Each embroidery piece reflects the individuality of its creator, ensuring no two are alike. The combination of stitch work and appliqué gives this embroidery its bold aesthetic, often incorporating geometric and curvilinear patterns. The motifs, primarily based on nested squares, are believed to offer protection and bring good fortune.

Traditionally, embroidery used waste fabric pieces, incorporating white, printed, or colored cloth on vibrant backgrounds like red. Designs begin with outer layers, moving inward, with clan-specific motifs embroidered in a prescribed sequence. The remaining design is left to the artisan’s imagination, making each piece unique. Women possess extensive knowledge of motifs and their meanings, using embroidery as a medium for storytelling and cultural expression.

Each embroidery style follows unwritten rules regarding stitches, patterns, and colors, though artisans improvise within these parameters. Motifs are inspired by daily life, ancient beliefs, and rituals, principles, ethics and universal truth telling motifs and passed down from mother to daughter. These designs hold deep significance for both their creators and users. Clothing details such as skirts, blouses, head coverings, and jewelry serve as indicators of a woman's skill, marital status, and position within the community, reinforcing Gormati identity through their artistic heritage.

The motifs in embroidery, as practiced as the heritage of the Indus civilization, are shown as an **appendix.1**

The power of this embroidery comes largely from the closely stitched patterns that completely cover the cloth. They take pride in the fact that their "stitches outlive the cloth on which they are sewn." The most intensively embroidered article of a Gormati woman's dowry is the Padrero wes, khalchi, kotali, gala, gadi, baglus, aadcheda, chewtiya, etc. Its color and motifs visually communicate the age, marital status, and principles, ethics and universal truth telling motifs. These embroidery products have a unique expression of the woman who made them. No two are the same. The embroidery technique of this embroidery is uniquely distinct. The combination of stitch work and appliqué holds a magnetic and bold aesthetic. This embroidery is strong and durable, with geometric, curvilinear lines and motifs. Strong, bold patterns: most motifs are based on the geometry of nested and altered squares. Both mirrors and motifs have auspicious power and are believed to offer protection from harm.

Tightly finished and flawlessly executed stitch work—these products let the embroidery speak for it. Simple Gormati embroidery designs for an eye-catching and sophisticated look. Some stitches like Sud and pouches made for goddesses, embroidered and raw thread for marriage ceremonies, made by menopaused women only.

Despite government pressure to settle, often on infertile land, the Gormati community has retained much of its traditional lifestyle. Modernization has led to relaxed restrictions on women’s movement, allowing them to work and acquire supplies.

However, they still take pride in their traditional dress, which remains one of the most elaborate and colorful among tribal groups in India. Their full-length skirts, predominantly red with navy blue and red borders, feature typical Gormati thread combinations. These garments, heavily embroidered and adorned with mirrors, showcase their artistic heritage.

The Gormati wardrobe is created using a variety of materials, including silver, brass, gold, cowries, ivory, animal bone. Heavy silver ornaments are a prominent feature, and cowries are frequently incorporated into embroidery. With one of the largest stitch vocabularies of any cultural group, this embroidery stands as a testament to their proud artistic legacy, with every thread woven into their rich heritage. (Charlotte Kown and Tim McLaughlin 2016,)

Proof of origin of Embroidery

Some people consider embroidery and Bharatkam are the same, but according to Gor/Gormati women "Kashido (Embroidery) is an art created by simple sewing of different types of stitches on a cloth with various threads in an attractive color scheme which covers base fabric is known as Kashido/Jali maki while "By measuring the warp and weft of the cloth, in the folds of the bar, the thread creates a square or rectangular diamond and fills it with the stitches so that the threads on the cloth are reversed." It is not visible from the side and the thick stitches with threads are visible on the opposite side is known as “Bharatkam / valto teko”. The Sun hemp sack made by Gormati men is embroidered with Valto Teko it means that Gormati woman embroiders on cloth while men embroider on the Sun hemp sackcloth (Dr.Shriram S.P 2004,9) In this paper, we are going to see the ancientness of Gormati embroidery.

Since the introduction of agriculture by carnivorous humans, He began to subsist on vegetable matter; But due to the capriciousness of nature, deficiency and sometimes excess of food led to barter as a neighbourhood religion. First, there was a settlement, then a neighbourhood, then another region, and finally, an exchange with another country started. Over time this transfer developed and a class was created to do this work. To protect themselves and their goods, this class began to go in groups, thus the merchant class emerged.

India was the first in the world to start agriculture fifty thousand years ago, and since the last fifty thousand years, traders and their staff have been moving more or less in India. During this period, these traders started trading with the country and abroad. Along with exchanging goods, information, a part, new ideas, inventions, etc. Various types of information were spreading to other areas. The fruit of this is that 10-12 thousand years ago the goods of India went abroad, eg. A cave painting from Lussac, France shows a man wearing a fine and smooth cotton cloth delicately stitched with fine bone needles. Robert Silverberg believes that the delicately stitched cotton, fine and smooth cloth on the human body and on the animal in this picture came from India, because cotton is not grown in France today. (Balkrishna Sitaram Baldava, 1994,297,298)

In the 21st chapter of the Yajurveda, the 6th and the 22nd chapter, the 7th Richa, mention is made of the fast-moving, burden-carrying Taurus. This is the load-carrying bull i.e. the bull carrying the goods placed on the back by the Gormati people. This cloth may have been taken there by this merchant. In the cave painting, a dead animal is covered with a cotton cloth and a man is seen standing in grief. In another cave painting, a man is seen painting the head of Reda, which suggests that the horned bull worshiping man may be a Harappan trader. This is because the cotton trading community used to be in this area during this period. Some believe that the head worn by the man in the picture is that of Reda; But since France was not the birthplace of the buffalo, the head must have been that of a bull. This may have been curiously depicted by the Megadolian man

(Dr.Shriram S.P 2004,11) As like stitching in the painting in Lussac Cave, embroidery is an ancient art.

An embroidered garment is known as Peshas in Vaidik literature. Richas from Rigveda 1.47.2,1.48.13,1.49.2, 1.64.8.,1.84.13, 1.84.16, 1.92.4, 1.92.5, 2.3.6, 2.32.5, 2.34.3,4.36.7, 5.55.6, 5.57.4, 7.34.11, 10.85.44, Yajurveda 20.40

The meaning of the word peshas is varied by different scholars, but according to Macdonald and Keith it refers to the embroidered garment used by the dancers. Griffiths considers Peshas to be an embroidered zartari cloth, while Prof. Sarkar says that it is in the same way (Dr.Shriram S.P 2004,11)

राकामहं सुहवां सुष्टुती हुवे श्रृणातु नः सुभगा बाधतू त्मना सीव्यतपः

सूच्याच्छिद्यमानया ददातू वीरं शतदायम मुक्थ्यम ॥४॥ (Maxmuller vol. II,1890,168)

This 4th richa of 32nd sukta of 2nd Mandal of Rigved shows that kashidakari must have been a profession in the Indus civilization period. In these Richas, Rakadevi must be an expert in embroidering, that's why the Arya Rishis praise her appropriately and say that with her unbreakable needle, sews our (Gods and Arya's) hearts firmly together.

यास्ते राके सुमतयेः सुपेशसा याभीददोसि दाषुस वसुनी ताभिनो

आद्य सुमना उपागही सहस्त्रपोशम सुभगे रराणा ॥५॥ (Maxmuller vol. II,1890,168)

This 5th richa of 32nd sukta of 2nd Mandal of Rigved says that you are the wearer of embroidered clothes and you donate clothes to thousands of slaves and devotees.

हेमंतेना ऋतुना देवास्त्रीणवे मरूता स्तुताः

बलेना शक्करीःसहो हविरिंद्रे वयो दधुः ॥२७॥ (Dr. Tulsi Ram,709)

शैशिरेण ऋतुना देवास्त्रयस्त्रिशेषामृता स्तुताः।

सत्येन रेवतीः क्षत्रम हविरिंद्रे वयो दधुः ॥२८॥ (Dr. Tulsi Ram,709)

In the 27th and 28th verses of the 21st chapter of the Yejurveda, the names of the strong Shakari and the truth-speaking Revati are mentioned.

महानाम्नयो रेवत्यो विश्वा आशाः प्रभूवरीः।

मेघीर्विद्युतो वाचः सूचीभि शम्यन्तु त्वा ॥३५॥ (Dr. Tulsi Ram,742)

In the 35th verse of the 23rd chapter, there are the names of Revati, Meghi who are famous in all directions of the world and are proficient in embroidery,

नार्यस्ते पल्यो लोम विचिन्वन्तु मनीषया ।

देवानां पल्यो दिशः सूचीभिः शम्यन्तू त्वा ॥३६॥ (Dr. Tulsi Ram,742)

In the 36th verse of the 23rd chapter, Anarya woman is said to do single hair of the sacrificed horse to make things from the hair of the horse.

रजता ,हरीणीः सीसा युजो युज्यन्ते कर्मभिः

अश्वस्य अश्वस्य वाजिनस्त्वची सीमाः शम्यन्तु शम्यन्ती ॥३७॥ (Dr. Tulsi Ram,743)

The sages pray in the 37th Richa that this woman uses gold, silver and copper needles to draw lines (kashida) on the horse's skin like kashida on cloth.

सन्धये जारं गेहायोपपतीमार्त्यै परिवित्तं निर्ऋत्यै परिविदानमराध्या एदिधिषुः पतिं निष्कृत्यै पेशस्कारीं संज्ञानाय स्मरकारी प्रकामोद्यायोपसदं वर्णायानुरुधं बलायो पदाम ॥९॥ (Dr. Tulsi Ram,933)

In the 9th Richa of the 30th Chapter of the Vejurveda , there is a list of all the non-Aryan humans sacrificed by the Arya Gana in the Purushmedha because they became famous because of their mastery in their work. It is evident from the word Peshaskari (Kashidakari) in these richa[33]

अमूर्या यन्ति याषितो हिरा लोहितवाससः । अभ्रातरइव जामयस्तिष्ठन्तु हतवर्चसः ॥१॥ (Dr. Tulsi ram,2013,32)

In the first richa of the 17th sukta of the 1st kanda of the Atharva Veda, there is a mention of red clothes-wearing brotherless sister.

The Lusak cave mural shows a human figure and the fine and soft cotton embroidery on this human body was originated in the Harappan culture, i.e. today's India, but spread elsewhere due to the mercantile attitude of the Gormati. The stitches of the Gormati embroidery travelled to many countries like Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Sumer, Egypt, East Asia, which is Siberia today in China.

Due to family, social and national health, beauty and neatness, the flourishing and progress of this art. It happened quickly. Indian embroidery was as rich as Indian culture. During the Golden Age, this art was held in high esteem. This art existed in India thousands of years ago. This art shows the religious attitude of India. Patterns of embroidery can be seen in Indian temples. At places of pilgrimage like Varanasi, Puri, Chikkanpeta, etc., the earlier types of embroidery are still seen. etc. S. Earlier India used to trade with countries like Rome, Egypt, Iran, Java, Sumatra for talam cloth, indigo and gems. Indian handicrafts were in demand abroad. Hence, Indian embroidery went to western countries. The artisans there decorated the embroidered tanks with their names, so this art became worldwide.

As the original embroidery of India began to be exchanged around the world, all the stitches went all over the world. Total main tanks are 75 and since then over 300 tanks exist as every country has added to it. Since there was no way of writing down earlier, it is not possible to tell which stitch was introduced to embroidery by whom and how many years ago. Art of embroidery in every country (backward country) of the world women of wild tribes like Toda, Banjari, Rabari, Adivasi, Gond etc. do embroidery work with slight differences. "Vienna, Japan, France, America and other developed countries have created new types of embroidery and different styles in embroidery. (Prabhawati puram,1978,147) as quoted by Prabhawati Puram Gormati stitches spread all over word along with these traders, artisans, wives, and daughters. The wives and daughters of the merchants used to embroider, and they had to stay in one place for 4-4 months, so the people there must have acquired this art in 2250 BC. Since then, this embroidery has spread to other countries. This art flourished in the Indus civilization and it was rich like the Indus culture. (Dr.Shriram S.P 2004,14)

The names of women embroiderers in Yajurveda were Sakari, Meghi, Chapali, Revati, while in Vedic times men's names were Vala, Bhoja, Soma, Babaru, Jeta, Rekha, Jema. Even today these names are prevalent in Gormati community.

The gold, silver, and copper needles described in the Yajurveda are found in the excavations at Harappa, and there is tradition in this community to gift a gold needle to a daughter in her wedding by maternal and fraternal grandmother. She was embroidering with those needles until the 18th century. Gormati women are still using these needles today.

Even today, there is a favourite red color of Gormati women's even after thousands of years. She does embroidery on red fabric using Half red color threads and half other color threads. considering the color scheme of threads and clothes in Gormati women's embroidery, the red color is associated with prosperity like the people of Yugoslavia.Some stitches of Gormati embroidery are found on paintings of the idols, pottery, excavated at Harappa, some pictures of stitches on Rango metal objects used by Gormati women can be seen even today.

The script found at Mohenjodaro contains illustrations of the Kata and Chopchuni/ gom stitches of the Gormati embroidery. Excavations at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa have been excavated Mudras by archaeologists, which shows pictures of everyday objects, handicraft stitches, and local objects. Even today, these objects are prevalent in Gormati language and they have separate names. More than 2000 such coins

have been found in excavations in Indus period villages out of which 270 show numerals while others are symbols of everyday use, stitches, animals, objects, birds, etc.

The currency found at Mohenjo-daro no. 54, 459, 139, 102, represents kata (makiwal and bana makiwal). 227,228 indicate ganno, 153,534, mirror, while mudra found at Harappa, reference 395, Kangwa / Kangshi, 256 Chotala, 50 Ghugri, 388, 257 Mirror, 713 Ganno, 444 Choko. In these mudras there are pictures of animals and birds like dog, cat, mouse, scorpion, snake, camel, crow, fish, chicken, peacock, bull. While the images of stitches like Katarya Sud, Paso Teko, Chopchuni, Sakiya, etc. are drawn on these mudras. Chopchuni is a plant found in northwest India and north of it in the Hunan province, hence the names given to the stitches that look like this plant by a Gormati woman, Chopchuni. (Sir John Marshall ,1931)

All the stitches of the Gormati woman's Valto Teko type are painted on a jar found at Pirak.Excavations in the Indus area have found Neem leaves and the Neem leaf of the Gormati is a goddess symbol. Even today, Gormati system of justice is done under the Neem tree. Magesthenes and Arrian, coming in the third century, about handicrafts, also wrote that Indians were fond of embroidered cloth. Kashidayukta clothes are also mentioned in the Jain Chhand Sutras.

The names of the stitches in this belt should be the same as the names of the stitches in Gormati embroidery/ Kashidakari. Gormati women embroidered cotton cloth with a bright red color. This Kashida cutting (fork) is like a saw blade. Similarly, in Turkey cotton cloth has been embroidered with bright red color like hooks and saw blades since ancient times.

In Morocco, the shape of the geometric design is embroidered. Samples of embroidery from ancient Egypt are available and the oldest example of the 4th Tethmarmosis (15th century BC) was found in Bevus in 1903. It is embroidery in red, blue, green, white and black colors on cotton cloth. It is currently in the Cairo Museum. (Dr.Shriram S.P 2004,14-17) Considering the similarities in language and culture of Sumer, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Egypt (Iraq), Iran, etc., the cotton embroidered cloths may have been supplied to the people of Egypt by the traders.

The culture of the Sumerians is considered to be the oldest in the Western world. These people were even earlier than the pyramid people of Egypt. The Sumerian culture flourished in the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in Mesopotamia or Iraq. These people carved their writings on terracotta or thin baked clay bricks or boards. His script was like hieroglyphics. Many such clay tablets have been found. The plates of these Sumerians are dated from 4200 to 2800 BC. The inscriptions on these tablets contain the description

"That Anki came from the water god Dilmun from the east. Many learned people came with her. Those people knew many subjects like agriculture, handicrafts, mathematics, sculpture, construction etc. He taught us to farm. Those people designed the cities. Cities were named. Eridu Port was built here. Those people had given us information on many subjects.

According to the Greek scholar Periplus, Dilmun was not an imaginary village but the name of a centre in the region near the mouth of the Narmada River on the Arabian Sea. This region was also named Gandha or Gandhara. Kandahar in Afghanistan today is old Gandhara. But the region near the mouth of the river Narmada was also called Gandha or Gandhara. Sumer village names were Larak, Sleeper, Suripak. Our names were Dilmun Disapur, Saripak Soparak, Larak Lat, Barugaza or Bhrigukchch Bhadoch. (Balkrishna Sitaram Baldava, 1994,305,306)

In the Indus period Italy is said to be popular as a trade centre of the Lambada. A So probably all the stitches in Kashida must have been prevalent there. And that is why

the writer Agner Miel should have called this country Queen of Embroidery. Italian women embroider geometric shapes with brightly colored threads. (Prabhawati puram,1978,149) The Greeks used to create a peplos band to cover the idol of the deity. Similarly, this community even today for the installation of the Goddesses consider 'Galno' to be a replica of the Earth with five continents (Pachamal) as the Goddess is seated on the middlemost continent and thus install the Goddess in the middle. This square panel is beautifully decorated with Kavadi (Seashell). Kavadi means Matrudaivat. It is used only on auspicious occasions. (Dr.Shriram S.P 2004,14)

As per the above reference, it is proven that Indian women's handicrafts were spread across all the countries of the world by these Gormati traders. Embroidery is practiced to some extent in almost all countries of the world, but it is found on a large scale in 53 countries. All types of stitches in embroidery are done all over the world. In it, each country shows its own characteristics with a little addition in single stitch mastery is developed by them. However, a total of 80 stitches in Gormati embroidery are not seen in any other country.

The rich art of India's Harappans dating back to 3-4 thousand years ago is alive even after 6 thousand years of human beings and it reached different countries by traders Gomati Ladeni, and it is still prevalent in West Asia, Europe and East Africa continent. The Gormati community has been scattered in 56 countries of the world, Roma, Gypsies and the people of that country have given different names to this community in their way. How did the stitches of all the above Eurasian nations come into the handwork of the white woman? If today's Gore Gana is barbaric, how did they go abroad and capture the stitches and give them independent names? If the barbaric Gore community lives in Tanda without any connection with other communities, from where did the Gore women acquire the art of making beautiful embroidered garments? Answers to these various questions will give Only a Harappani decedent of harappan women who has inherited years of embroidery and is skilled in the craft can give it. Because this rustic illiterate woman of today was a graduate in the crafts of the golden age. So, she had reached the pinnacle of embroidery in the world of handicrafts. What we today call women's education; in those days hand embroidery must have been the education. Until the 19th century, the education of young women in Gormati community was embroidery.

Conclusion

Gormati embroidery is not just a craft but a rich cultural tradition that embodies the heritage of a nomadic community with deep historical roots. Its origins, traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization and ancient Vedic texts, highlight its significance in trade, social structure, and artistic expression. Despite challenges posed by modernization and economic shifts, Gormati embroidery remains an integral part of cultural identity, preserved through generational knowledge and continued practice.

This embroidery represents more than aesthetic appeal; it signifies resilience, adaptability, and the unbroken lineage of artistic excellence. As efforts to revive and sustain this art form grow, it is crucial to recognize its historical value and support its practitioners. By doing so, we not only preserve a precious cultural heritage but also empower communities whose history is intricately woven into every stitch of their embroidery.

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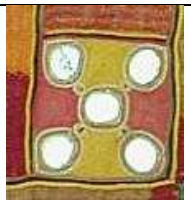
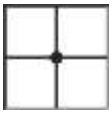
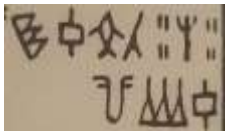
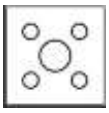
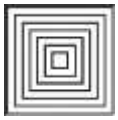
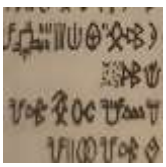
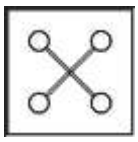
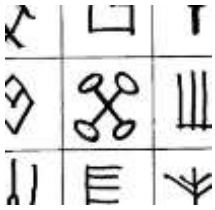
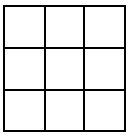
Appendix-I
Motifs of Indus Valley Civilization prevailing in Gormati Embroidery

Colour combination	**Indus**	**Gormati embroidery**
Red/yellow/Green /Red		

Mirror work		

Sr.no	motif	Indus civilization	Motif existing in Gormati embroidery
1			
2			

3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			

10			
11			
12			
13			

Also, more motifs and pictographs are found in Indus valley civilization which are prevailing in lifestyle of Gormati and Tandho System. Above motifs from IVC are noted in embroidery.

Two Old Marāṭhī Inscriptions from South Mahārāshṭra Belonging to the Yādava Period

Atharva Pingale

Introduction

This paper presents a critical edition and analysis of two unpublished 13th-century Old Marāṭhī inscriptions, offering valuable insights into the linguistic, religious and administrative developments under the Yādava dynasty. These inscriptions illuminate the emergence of Marāṭhī as the principal administrative language in South Mahārāshṭra, as well as the patterns of religious patronage prevalent during this period.

The first of the two inscriptions edited in this paper lies in the Sāgareshwar temple, located near Devrāshṭre village in Kaḍegāon taluka of Sāṅglī district. This inscription has remained unnoticed in major epigraphic corpora, official reports and archaeological surveys conducted thus far.[1] It is being published here for the first time in an academic edition.

The second inscription is located in the temple of Gāwḍūbāī, situated in the village of Mhākave, near the Mahārāshṭra–Karnāṭaka border, in Kāgal taluka of Kolhāpūr district. Like the former, this inscription too had remained neglected and undeciphered. It is similarly receiving its first publication in the present paper.

A Devrāshṭre inscription of Yādava Kānharadeva

The inscription is engraved on a stone slab bearing five lines of writing altogether. The stone slab measures approximately 90 cm in length, 40 cm in breadth and 17 cm in thickness. At the top of the stone are symbolic depictions of the sun and moon. Below these, a plough and a Śivaliṅga are carved, one after the other. Above the plough carving, a few letters are inscribed in the upper left corner of the slab. At the end of the inscribed text, the stone features a carved figure of a cow, followed by the etching of a sword.

The characters belong to the southern variety of the Nāgarī script, datable to the 13th century. The language of the inscription is Old Marāṭhī. The text contains some orthographic errors, likely resulting from the engraver's misreading or careless execution of the draft placed before him.

The inscription bears the date Śaka 1169, Plavaṅga Saṁvatsara which corresponds to 1247 CE. The king mentioned in the inscription is 'Kanhārādeva'. He has not been assigned any title except 'Rāya' (or 'Rāṇa'). Even though identifying him is not a big deal. At that time the Yādavas of Devagiri were ruling over South Mahārāshṭra as seen from their inscriptions discovered in that region. Bellambi inscription of Yādava Kṛṣṇa alias Kānharadeva is dated to 1247 CE.[2] Likewise, his Mānur inscription explicitly mentions 1248 CE as his second regnal year.[3] Thus, 'Kanhārādeva' of the Devrāshṭre inscription is none other than Yādava Kānharadeva. During the initial two years of his reign, his predecessor and grandfather, 'Siṅghaṇadeva II', was presumably still alive. As a result of that, Kānharadeva had hardly assumed the epithets indicating his sovereignty. In Mānur inscription, he is called 'Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara'. No wonder that the epigraph of his first year is referring to him simply as 'Rāya'. This inscription is the oldest record of

[1] Another inscription, preserved alongside this one and likewise unnoticed in previous surveys, has not been edited here as it is severely abraded and worn; hence requires proper cleaning before it can be accurately studied. The preservation of the letters in the surviving portion is also unsatisfactory but they yield a place name 'करहड' which is to be expounded upon further in the present paper.

[2] ARIE 1945-46: No. 14.

[3] Deshpande 2013: 102.

Kanhārādeva in Mahārāshṭra. Also, it is one of his three known inscriptions from Sāṅglī, alongside the Tāsgāon plates and the Kavlāpūr inscription.

The inscription further mentions territory of 'Bhālavaṇa Pradeśa' which formed a part of Karhāḍa Deśa. The next section of the inscription in lines 3-4 describes the donor, 'Māideva', who has donated some land for the purpose of the charitable distribution of food and water. The final part contains a usual prose imprecation containing an ass-curse (गद्धेगाळ) against revocation and violation of the grant.

A certain Māideva is mentioned as a donor in the Bhāḷavṇī inscription of Siṅghaṇadeva II, dated 1216 CE, wherein he is recorded to have made donations to a local deity named 'Bhāiyala'.[4] Although there is a gap of thirty-one years between that record and the present inscription, the possibility that the Māideva referred to in both instances is the same individual cannot be ruled out. If this conjecture holds, it would suggest that Māideva was a prominent and affluent figure in the region. The letters inscribed on the left corner indicate the possibility that Māideva's father was named 'Trivikrama'. It may further be proposed that Māideva instituted the perpetual donation in Trivikrama's memory.

Of the place names mentioned, 'Karhāḍa Deśa' is well known since ancient times. It appears as 'Karahāṭa' in various early scriptures. During the medieval period, the region is referred to in inscriptions as 'Karahāḍa 4000'. This territory broadly encompassed parts of present-day Satara and Sangli districts in Mahārāshṭra, along with the Bijāpur district in Karnāṭaka. Bhāḷavaṇī, an important town within this region, is even described as the capital of Karahāḍa in certain records from the time of the Southern Kalacuris.[5] It is also mentioned in one of these records that Bhāḷavaṇī was part of the 7th and 12th units of the Karahāḍa region.[6] The present inscription also appears to use the expression 'Bhāḷavaṇī region' in reference to these very divisions. The village of Bhāḷavaṇī still exists under the same name and is located in the Khanāpur-Viṭā taluka of Sāṅglī district. The boundaries of the agricultural land granted by Māideva are not mentioned in the inscription. However, it is certain that the land must have been located in the nearby region where the inscription was found. The distance between Bhāḷavaṇī and Devrāshṭre is approximately 11 kilometers.

Text:

1. स्वस्ती स्त्री सकु ११६९ पलवंग
2. संवसरे राए[7] स्त्री कन्हारादेव वीजयरज्ये[8]
3. कऱ्हाड देसी भालवण प्रदेसचा[9] माइ-
4. देव दता कितीक अन्नोदकांची व्रीती
5. लोपु करव[10] वा त्या फेडी तेय[11] गढौ[12] बापु ॥

In the left corner -

1. जनकु त्रिविक्रम

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[4] Kolte, 1987: 224.
[5] Kolte, 1987: 223.
[6] Kolte, 1987: 251.
[7] The word is also susceptible to being read as रण, which is a scribal error for *राण.*
[8] Read विजयराज्ये.
[9] Read प्रदेसीचा.
[10] Read करवी.
[11] Read तेया.
[12] Read गाढौ.

B Mhākave inscription of the time of Rāmacandradeva

The inscription is engraved on a stone slab bearing five lines of writing in total. The slab measures approximately 69 cm in length, 46 cm in breadth and is slightly mutilated along the edges, resulting in the loss of a few letters. At the top of the slab are symbolic depictions of the Sun, Śivaliṅga and moon, arranged sequentially. Below these symbols is a carved figure of a cow, indicative of opulence and devotion, followed by the etching of a Khaḍga (sword) signifying sovereign power as well as authority. On the upper right corner of the slab, a few letters are inscribed in three short lines, seemingly a continuation of the purport. Notably, the characters in the last line of the main text are comparatively smaller, as the available space was limited.

The characters belong to the Nāgarī script, datable to the 13th century. The language of the inscription is Old Marāṭhī. As in several contemporary records, this text too contains orthographic inconsistencies.

The inscription bears the date Śaka 1210 and Sarvadhārin Saṁvatsara, which corresponds to 1288 CE. At that time, much of Mahārāshṭra was under the sway of the Yādava dynasty and the reigning monarch was Rāmacandra, whose rule had spanned over four decades.

The purport records the construction of a temple, which is evidently the same structure where the present inscription is preserved. However, although the temple is now known by the name of the local goddess 'Gāwḍūbāī', its original name is not mentioned anywhere in the inscription. From its architectural style, the temple can be ascribed to the Yādava period. From the fragmentary letters preserved at the top right of the slab, it can be inferred that some tax-free land was also granted for the maintenance of the temple, which was located to the east. No other details of the donated land are given.

The inscription mentions a certain 'Ratnadhaja', i.e., Ratnadhvaja, who appears to have been a subordinate or attendant of a guru named 'Ravaladeva'. While the precise identity of this Ratnadhvaja cannot be conclusively established, it is worth noting that a 'Ravaladeva Nāyaka' is mentioned in the Aināpūr inscription of Yādava Mahādeva, dated 1269 CE, from Kolhāpūr district.[13] In that record, he is styled as 'Rājaguru' and is named alongside other individuals such as 'Jīvanārāyaṇa' and 'Viṣāladeva'.[14] He is said to have been the son of 'Vaṅkaka' (or possibly 'Vaṅkama', the variation could either be due to a scribal error or a misreading by the editors). The chronological gap between the two inscriptions is about 20 years but considering the geographical proximity and regional continuity between Aināpūr and Mhākave, it is highly probable that the Ravaladeva mentioned in both records refers to the same individual. His association with administrative and religious titles, such as Rājaguru, further supports the likelihood of his long-standing prominence under successive Yādava rulers. The continuity also underscores the influential role he might have played over several decades, not only as a prominent figure in local religious activities but also as a spiritual preceptor in the southern part of Kolhāpur district. Furthermore, Ratnadhvaja may well have been a devotee of the goddess enshrined in the temple where the inscription is found. Eventually, it is quite possible that Ravaladeva caused the land to be permanently endowed to the temple. The regional religious background suggests that his devotion and temple-related activities were likely shaped by the broader Śākta tradition prevalent in the area. Kolhāpur has remained a renowned Śākta centre over the centuries; hence, Śākta prominence in its surrounding region is hardly unusual. The -dhvaja ending of the name

[13] Saṁśodhaka, Sept. 1990: 34 ff.

[14] It is not clear whether both of these people are different or Viṣāladeva had the epithet 'Jīvanārāyaṇa'.

Ratnadhvaja may suggest that he was a yogin or ascetic, possibly associated with the Nātha cult.

This inscription, like the first, deserves careful linguistic attention. Before the rise of the Yādavas, Kannaḍa appeared predominantly alongside Sanskrit in the inscriptions of South Mahārāshṭra. Its use expanded significantly in the 11th century CE with the resurgence of the Later Cālukyas. The rule of this dynasty marked the emergence of Kannaḍa as an official language. Moreover, it was employed across a wider border region adjoining Karnāṭaka. It also extended into various parts of Mahārāshṭra where it had not previously been attested in inscriptions. Many feudatories of the Cālukyas, especially those whose territories situated near the linguistic borders of Kannaḍa, started incorporating the language into their administrative and epigraphic practices. Many feudatories also adopted Kannaḍa epithets as evident from the inscriptions of that time. However, the influence declined with the fall of the Cālukyas.[15] Reign of the Yādavas evidently saw replacement of Kannaḍa with Marāṭhī in the epigraphs of Marāṭhī majority regions, which indicates a clear-cut predilection for the native language. No Kannaḍa inscriptions of the Yādavas have been discovered in districts such as Sātārā, Lātūr and Nāndeḍ, where Kannaḍa had previously dominated the epigraphic landscape before their emergence. Instead, Kannaḍa inscriptions from the Yādava period are mainly found in the bordering regions of Kolhāpūr, Sāṅglī, Solāpūr and Dhārāshiv (formerly Osmānābād) districts. The territories encompassed by these districts during the Yādava rule included Miriñjadeśa (covering parts of present-day Kolhāpūr, Sāṅglī and Beḷgāum in Karnataka), Tarikāḍunāḍ (which consisted of Bijāpur district and southwestern portion of Solāpūr, including its principal town, Maṅgaḷaveḍhā), Kuruvalagenāḍ (roughly aligning with the southern parts of Solāpūr) and Āṇandūru 300 (comprising areas of Solāpūr and predominantly the southern province of Dhārāshiv). Majority portion of these regions was Kannaḍa-speaking during the Yādava reign. Particularly, talukas like Akkalkoṭ, South Solapur, Jat and parts of Miraj as well as Shiroḷ have retained a considerable Kannaḍa-speaking population even today. It is therefore unsurprising that these regions continued to produce Kannaḍa inscriptions even after the fall of the Yādava dynasty. However, in Marāṭhī-dominant areas, the linguistic shift was complete and irreversible. While certain Marāṭhī inscriptions from these regions include some Kannaḍa vocabulary, such terms were likely maintained due to their institutional familiarity and practical utility. The introduction of Marāṭhī as an epigraphic language was something previously unseen in South Mahārāshṭra; still, it eventually took place. As stated above, Karahāḍa 4000 included some parts of modern-day Karnāṭaka too but its Marāṭhī speaking part switched completely to Marāṭhī. Several areas of Solāpūr witnessed the same transition. Even some of the bordering regions of Kolhāpūr followed suit as evident from the present inscription.[16]

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[15] For example, the Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ bore several Kannaḍa epithets such as 'Birudaṅkarāma', 'Gaṇḍaraganḍa', 'Gaṇḍavaṅgara', 'Pusigañjuvāta', and 'Villaviḍeṅga', particularly from the last decades of the 10th century CE, notably during the reign of Aparājita. These epithets are not attested in earlier inscriptions and disappear by the end of the 12th century CE (For more details, see Mirashi 1979, Vol. 2: 21–143). This pattern clearly reflects the temporary influence of the Cālukyas, which began in the latter half of the 10th century and continued until the late 12th century CE.

[16] A Kannaḍa inscription dated to 1240 CE, preserved in the Kolhāpūr Museum and associated with a Jaina context, stands as a rare exception to the general pattern (Ritti and Karvirkar 2000: 102-103). Its original provenance remains unknown, although it records a grant made to the Jaina ascetic 'Sarasvatī Bāḷacandra', who was an Ācārya of the 'Tribhuvanatilakatīrtha Jinālaya' at 'Kollāpura' (modern Kolhāpūr). It is entirely plausible that this inscription was originally situated in a border region, possibly within the Kannaḍa-speaking areas and was later relocated to Kolhāpūr. Such relocation is not without precedent, as demonstrated in another documented case (See Deo 1982: 733). It is important to note that the name of the

This reflects well on the linguistic policy of the Yādavas. Theirs was the first dynasty to implement Marāṭhī in official epigraphic and administrative practice. As the Yādavas were associated with Mahārāshṭra from the very beginning, their linguistic affiliation is quite understandable. In various inscriptions from Karnāṭaka and Āndhra, they are referred to as 'Seuṇa', a regional designation.[17] This Seuṇadeśa was located within Mahārāshṭra itself.[18] The earliest inscriptions of the Yādavas are invariably found in Mahārāshṭra and are written either in Sanskrit or Old Marāṭhī.[19] In contrast, Kannaḍa inscriptions attributed to the Yādavas first appear during the reign of Bhillamadeva V (late 12th century CE), following his military expansion into Karnāṭaka. Prior to this period, there is no evidence of their use of Kannaḍa. Their longstanding association with Marāṭhī and Mahārāshṭra is also attested in the records of their contemporaries.[20] Significantly, the earliest known coins issued by the dynasty bear legends in Marāṭhī,[21] which further affirms their deep linguistic and cultural integration with the region. Later

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same ascetic appears in an inscription discovered at Miraj, dated roughly to 1241 CE, from the reign of Siṅghaṇadeva II (ARIE 1949–50: 31). This strongly suggests that both references are to the same inscription, which was originally situated at Miraj and later deposited to the Kolhāpūr Museum.

[17] Pratāparudrayaśobhuṣaṇa: 232. Śloka 156 - "राज्ञो यादववंशपार्थिवमणेः प्रख्यातशौर्यश्रियस्त्वङ्गत्तुङ्गतुरङ्गसैन्यमहतो मानैकवित्तस्य च । सद्यो रुद्रनरेन्द्रनायकचमूनाथेन केनाप्यधिक्षिप्तस्याचरितानि सेवणपतेर्जानाति सा गौतमी ॥" For more explanation, see IA, Vol. 21: 199-200.

[18] Deshpande 2013: 24.

[19] The Marāṭhī inscriptions of the Yādavas, though not as numerous as their Kannaḍa inscriptions from the Karnāṭaka region, effectively supplanted Kannaḍa in the Marāṭhī-speaking territories. This shift is particularly significant given the broader epigraphic context. All these inscriptions emerged in a milieu where no other prominent ruling dynasties, apart from the Eastern Gaṅgas, issued records in any of the New Indo-Aryan languages. Even in the case of Oḍia, the total number of inscriptions issued by the Eastern Gaṅgas from the early period until the dynasty's decline in the early 15th century remains fewer than the Marāṭhī inscriptions issued by the Yādavas up to the second decade of the 14th century CE. Furthermore, Telugu inscriptions of the Gaṅgas have been found within core Oḍia-speaking regions; for instance in various temples of Purī (cf. ARIE 1978–79: 98), indicating a fluid linguistic orientation. In contrast, not a single Kannaḍa inscription of the Yādavas has been found in the renowned temples situated near the Kannaḍa speaking region like the Mahālakṣmī temple in Kolhāpūr or the Viṭhṭhala temple in Paṇḍharpūr, let alone in the heartland of Central Mahārāshṭra. Interestingly, a few Marāṭhī inscriptions of the Yādavas have been found in the interior regions of Karnāṭaka itself. Noteworthy examples include an inscription from the reign of Siṅghaṇadeva II at Asandi in Chikmagaḷur district (EC, Revised ed., Vol. 12: 847) and another dated 1255 CE from the reign of Kānharadeva in Sorāb taluka, Shimogā district (EC, Vol. 8, Part 2: 38-39). Thus the impetus given to the Marāṭhī language under the Yādavas is palpable and undeniable.

[20] Such as, a Cālukya inscription from Achāpur records a Yādava commander using Marāṭhī expressions - "भाप्पु भाप्पु मझ भाप्प" (EC, Vol. 8: 215). Similarly, a Hoysaḷa inscription from Harihar describes 'Pāvusa', a commander of Siṅghaṇadeva II, as having praised 'Narasiṁha II' in Marāṭhī - "तू जगदेकवीरु मझ देवा रोहकु बापु यादवनारायणु नारसिंगु भलय" (EC, Vol. 11: 55). It is remarkable that some records of the Veḷanāṭi Cōḍas refer to the Yādavas by the term 'Marāṭa', meaning a native of Mahārāshṭra (Yashoda Devi 1993: 41). The designation 'Āreya' was widely used for Marāṭhī speakers in the southern regions. The Yādavas are also referred to as 'Āreya' in some inscriptions. One such mention occurs in an inscription of Hoysaḷa 'Vīra Ballāḷa III' (EC, Vol. 9: 14). Moreover, Islamic chroniclers like Baranī and Isāmī associate Yādavas with Mahārāshṭra. Lastly, a 14th-century charter from Goā, issued by a local ruler named 'Nāgadeva' of the Gauḍa Brahmin lineage, refers to one of his ancestors, 'Māyideva'. He is credited with reinstating the Kadamba ruler 'Tribhuvanamalla', also known as Sovideva, by expelling the 'Mahārāṣṭra rulers' who had seized his kingdom (Tulpule 1963: 279). These Mahārāṣṭra rulers are nobody other than the Yādavas and the reference likely relates directly to the campaign of Siṅghaṇadeva II, whose general 'Vīchaṇa' is known to have defeated Tribhuvanamalla (Moraes 1931: 207). Besides, this Māyideva can reasonably be identified with 'Māyideva Paṇḍita', a minister under Siṅghaṇadeva who governed the territory of Banavāsi, as has already been asserted by some scholars. Holding a prominent position, he appears to have successfully mediated between the Yādava-Kadamba conflict and eventually carved out an independent kingdom of his own. This is suggested by the discovery of certain gold coins in Goā that imitate Kadamba coinage, bearing the legend in Nāgarī - "स्त्रीसप्तकोटिस्वरचरणलब्धवर वीर(/स्त्री) मायिदेव".

[21] Saṁśodhaka, Sept. 1996: 60-63.

Yādava rulers, such as Rāmacandra, even adopted Marāṭhī epithets like 'पांडरीफडमुष्य' and 'समस्तां चालिआंचे सूक्त'[22]; again, highlighting their close identification with the regional culture.[23] Ultimately, the renowned Mahānubhāva scripture 'Līḷācaritra' explicitly portrays the Yādava kings as speakers of Marāṭhī and presents a thoroughly Marāṭhī linguistic and cultural environment in and around their capital. This linguistic preference clearly indicates that the Yādavas were a native dynasty rooted in the Marāṭhī-speaking region, closely aligned with its cultural and linguistic ethos.[24] Their institutional encouragement and administrative use of Marāṭhī played a pivotal role in elevating the language's status, laying the groundwork for its emergence as a prominent medium of literary and official expression in medieval Deccan.

The inscription under study employs pure Marāṭhī words such as 'मठि' and 'वावा', a usage that warrants special attention. These terms denote, respectively, a small temple and a cultivable field. Notably, they are still used in Marāṭhī in slightly changed forms. As to the geographical names, the inscription provides no specific details.

Text:

1. स्वस्ति श्री सकु १२१०

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[22] Tulpule 1963: 179.

[23] It is worth adding a few more observations in this connection. Yādava 'Bhillamadeva II' had assumed a Kannaḍa epithet 'Sellaviḍega', as attested in his Kaḷas Budruk copper plates dated to 1070 CE (EI, Vol. 2: 219). However, this can reasonably be attributed to Cālukya influence, as demonstrated in note 12. Additionally, It has been argued that certain rulers of the Yādava dynasty bore the title ''Karṇāṭarāyavaṁśabhirāma''; however, this title does not indicate any identification with the region of Karnāṭaka. Rather, it should be understood as a Caturthī-tatpuruṣa compound, meaning "the delight for the family of the rulers of Karnāṭa." The rulers referred to here are undoubtedly the Hoysaḷa kings. Siṅghaṇadeva II was the first Yādava monarch to carry this epithet. Even so, he has been called in one of his own inscriptions as 'Karṇṇāṭakṣitipāḷasainyatimirapradhvaṁsatībrātapa' (EC, Vol. 7: 114), which means "The blazing sunshine for destroying the darkness, the army of Karṇṇāṭa king". Interestingly, his grandfather Bhillamadeva V is also described in one of his inscriptions as 'Karṇṇāṭahṛtkaṇṭakah' meaning "the thorn in the hearts of the Karṇṇāṭa kings" (EI, Vol 1: 341). Notably, some Yādava inscriptions mentioning the early rulers of the dynasty describe the Cālukyas as the rulers of Karnāṭaka (Deshpande 2013: 54); at the same time, they never apply this term to themselves. All these assertions clearly demonstrate that the Yādavas conspicuously maintained a distinct and Mahārāshṭra-centric identity in contrast to that of their neighbouring powers.

[24] Some arguments deny the existence of royal patronage for Marāṭhī literature under the Yādavas; yet, such claims are unmistakably incorrect. The Mahānubhāva poet 'Narendra' and his two brothers, 'Sāla' and 'Nṛsiṁha', are explicitly described as dependants or protégés of Yādava Rāmacandra in Mahānubhāva sources (BISM Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 2: 79-80). Another notable Mahānubhāva poet and scholar, 'Gopāḷa Paṇḍita' (also known as 'Anerāja' or 'Anobāsa'), appears to have received direct sponsorship by 'Kāmāisā', a queen of Rāmacandra (Smṛtisthaḷa 1939: 49). Thus, rejecting the Yādava patronage of the Mahānubhāva litterateurs on the basis of their own records, which explicitly affirm it, amounts to a clear and fundamental logical inconsistency. On the other hand, no instance of direct patronage extended to Kannaḍa poets by the Yādavas is known. While certain Kannaḍa works contain panegyrics in praise of Bhillama, if the figure in question is indeed Bhillamadeva V, the panegyric verse alone does not, by itself, imply any courtly support. For instance, the 13th-century Marāṭhī saint-poet 'Jñāndeva' (Jñāneśvara) extols Rāmacandra in his celebrated work 'Jñāneśvarī', but this praise seems to have been motivated by individual respect rather than from any formal patronage. Similarly, it has been argued that the Jaina poet Kamalābhava's reference to Siṅghaṇadeva II's respect for the Jaina ascetic 'Vinayenduvratī' in his 'Śāntīśvarapurāṇa' serves as evidence of royal patronage. However, such occasional references do not constitute direct patronage. For comparison, 'Vṛddhācāra' of the Mahānubhāvas mentions 'Muḥammad bin Tughluq' (Smṛtisthaḷa 2010: 330). Also, certain 15th-century Jaina texts refer explicitly to 'Fīrūz Shāh Bahmanī' (Johrapurkar 1958: 255-56); nevertheless, these mentions in no way signify official patronage. So even if certain Kannaḍa works flourished during the Yādava period, their growth appears to have been more incidental than the result of any deliberate or sustained royal patronage.

2. सर्वधारि[25] सवत्स-
3. रे[26] रत्नधज[27] गुरु रव-
4. लदेव पुण्णकर[28] (पाद)[29] पद्मो-
5. पजीवि तिहि मठि केलि

In the right corner -
1. पूर्वै
2. अक(र)
3. ववा[30] द(त्त)

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[25] Read सर्वधारी.

[26] Read संवत्सरे.

[27] Read रत्नध्वज.

[28] Read पुण्यकर.

[29] This word appears to have been inadvertently omitted by the scribe.

[30] Read वावा.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1 - Devrāshṭre inscription

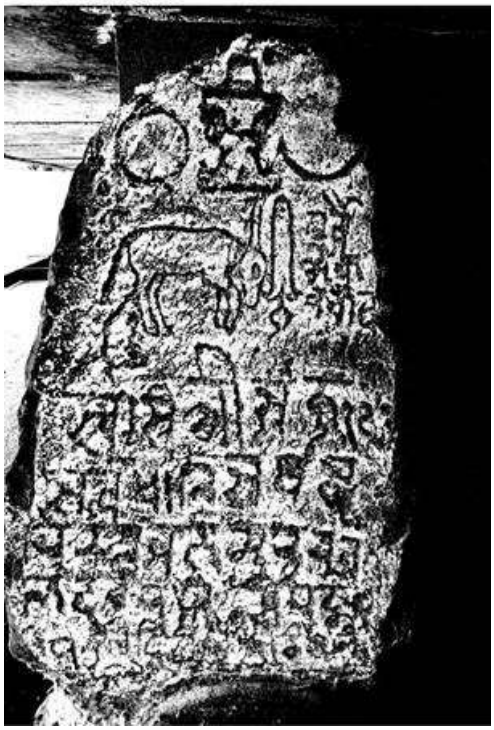

Fig. 2 - Mhākave inscription

Yoga and Artificial Intelligence: Analogical Overview

Jayesh Potnis

Introduction

Yoga and Artificial intelligence could seem extremely distinct. One part is related to ancient Indian philosophy and other is modern science and technology which is continuously evolving. Yoga philosophy explores the fundamental concepts and purposes of yoga, while the physical practice of yoga is a practical manifestation of those philosophical principles. Pātanjal yoga sūtras help to explore the depths to identify subject inside, whereas artificial intelligence focuses on outside solving problems to make life easy for humans. Though the end result seems quite opposite, the path to achieve those looks similar in nature. It can be also compared on multiple perspectives like consciousness, self-improvement, control over mental fluctuations, and systematic learning. This essay is an attempt to provide analogical overview of artificial intelligence and various yoga concepts, practices, techniques. In the process, it tries to interpret Pātanjal yoga sūtras differently in the context of artificial intelligence to provide comparative outline of various perspectives involved.

What is Yoga?

Yoga encompasses a broad spectrum, including both philosophical and physical aspects. Philosophically, it is a *darśana* (classical school of thought) that distinguishes between *prakṛti* (matter) and *puruśa* (pure consciousness). It also proclaims that all forms or activities of the mind are products of *prakṛti*, and completely distinct from *puruśa* i.e. the soul or true self. The physical practice of yoga is a practical application of these philosophical principles, focusing on physical fitness, mind control through meditation, breathing techniques and self-improvement.

What is Artificial Intelligence?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the theory and discipline of programming computer systems to learn from data sets. Artificial intelligence technologies collect data from vast sources to analyze and use it to assist business operations effectively. It is a technology that appears to simulate human intelligence with human-like problem-solving capabilities. It can recognize images, write poems, and make data-based predictions through continuous learning and predictions.

Concept Analogies

1. Data set

AI: Large collection of information that AI uses to learn. AI systems can identify patterns and make decisions.

Yoga: This can be explained using following Pātanjal yoga sūtras:

वृत्तयः पंचतय्यः क्लिष्टाक्लिष्टाः ॥१.५॥

प्रमाणविपर्ययविकल्पनिद्रास्मृतयः ॥१.६॥

There are five kinds of changing states of the mind, and they are either detrimental or non-detrimental (to the practice of yoga). These five categories (*pañcatayyaḥ*) of *vṛttis* (changing states of the mind); Patañjali indicates that these can be either *aklišṭa* (conducive) or *klišṭa* (detrimental) to the ultimate goal of yoga. These five *vṛttis* are: *pramān* (logic), *viparyay* (error), *vikalpa* (conceptualization, imagination), *nidrā* (deep sleep) and *smriti* (memory).

These sūtras can be considered here as basic data set available, various permutation and combination of which may provide additional patterns to establish trends. However, a detail study and research of yoga sutras may reveal more such parallels.

2. Algorithm

AI: Set of rules that tells the computer how to solve a problem or perform a task. It is a set of step-by-step instructions.

Yoga: Let's take two sūtras as an example here.

योगःचित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः ॥१.२॥

Yoga is the cessation (*nirodha*) of the activities or permutations (*vṛttis*) of the *citta*. The *vṛttis* refer to any sequence of thought, ideas, mental imaging, or cognitive act performed by the mind, intellect, or ego. These can also be seen as the restlessness of the mind caused by ignorance and desire, and are out of control. Yoga is the stilling of the changing states of the mind.

यम नियम आसन प्राणायाम प्रत्याहार
धारणा ध्यान समाधयो: अष्टौ अंगानि ॥२.२९॥

These are the eight limbs (अष्टांग) of Yoga. These eight limbs are *yama* (abstentions, moral restraints); *niyama* (ethical observances); *āsana* (posture); *prāṇāyāma* (breath control); *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses); *dhāraṇā* (concentration); *dhyāna* (meditation); and *samādhi* (full meditative absorption)

Similar to algorithms used in AI to perform certain tasks, these two sūtras can be seen as rules or instructions to follow i.e., algorithm. While there could be many more sūtras like this, these two are very much at the core of the philosophy.

3. Neural Network

AI: This a team of tiny brains inside a computer. They are computational models inspired by how brain works. Each neuron processes the information and passes it on to the other neuron.

Yoga: There are 3 aspects of *citta* – buddhi, ahaṅkāra and manas.

Buddhi, or intelligence, is responsible for judgment, discrimination, knowledge, decision-making, and will. It takes information from our senses (which is processed by *manas*, the mind) and shapes it into meaningful thoughts and ideas. It's like a tool that helps us make sense of the world and make good choices.

Ahaṅkāra, or ego, is the part of the *citta* that creates a sense of self—awareness of "I" and "mine." It makes us think, "I know," "I am this," or "This belongs to me." It also limits our awareness, which could be vast, by shaping it to fit within our individual body and mind.

Manas, the mind, is the aspect of *citta* that engages in the functions of thought especially related to organizing sensory input and directing the senses; it imposes a conceptual structure on the chaotic field of raw sensations, recognizing and identifying sensual impetuses and categorizing them.

Awareness of self and objects through various interactions between *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra* and *manas* can be seen as neural network in context of AI. Here each aspect processes, interprets and transfers the information in its own perspective helping to make decisions.

4. Machine Learning, Deep Learning

AI: Machine Learning (ML) is a process which allows computers to learn from data. Training process involves the computers identifying patterns in the data allowing to make predictions and decisions based on the 'new information'. It adapts automatically without being explicitly programmed.

Deep learning is a machine learning technique and process where neural networks, algorithms are used to process complex data to achieve high accuracy outcomes. It mimics the human brain to derive specific learning outcomes.

Yoga: Let's explore a few sutras here.

प्रत्ययस्य परचित्तज्ञानम् ॥३.१९॥

Performing *saṁyama* (i.e. *dhyān, dhāranā, samādhī*) on other people's *pratyayās* (i.e. ideas, notions, and mental images)—one can attain an understanding of their minds.

जातिलक्षणदेशैः अन्यता अनवच्छेदात्

तुल्ययोः ततः प्रतिपत्तिः ॥३.५३॥

According to this sūtra, objects are distinguished by species (*jāti*), characteristics (*lakśana*), and location (*deśa*). While common people see these differences, a yogī perceives changes at a subatomic level. Before creation, prakṛti is unmanifest, and no distinct objects exist. Matter forms as guṇas interact over time, creating *aṇus* (atoms). Through *saṁyama*, a yogī can perceive these subtle transformations.

Thus, the way AI systems learn automatically through Machine Learning and Deep Learning to predict, adapt and make subtle decisions, yogī can exhibit discernment or discrimination not only to attain understanding of other's minds but to also distinguish objects at subtle level.

5. Large Language Model (LLM)

AI: Large Language Models (LLMs) are advanced AI systems trained on vast amounts of data to understand and generate human-like text. They use deep learning to recognize patterns in words, sentences, and context. LLMs can be applied in various fields such as chatbots, customer service, online search, sentiment analysis, and even DNA research. They can also be fine-tuned for specific tasks, making them highly versatile. The choice of an LLM depends on the specific use case and requirements.

Yoga: Different types of Yoga like *Hathayoga*, *Kriyāyoga* etc. are available and cater to different needs and abilities. The right yoga practice should align with the practitioner's goals, physical and mental endurance, and personal preference s. Choosing the appropriate technique is essential for achieving the desired benefits, whether it's improved flexibility, inner peace, or spiritual growth. Since yoga is a deeply personal journey, a well-suited practice enhances both sustainability and effectiveness.

Here different variations and techniques like *Hathayoga*, *Kriyāyoga* available in the yoga tradition can be looked upon as LLM.

Process Analogies

Analogy of process, steps between Artificial intelligence and Yoga can be seen in following way.

1. Define the goal

AI: Clearly define the problem you want to solve. Set goals and define what success will look like. Metrics to be measured are decided.

Yoga: At a philosophical level, goal of Yoga is to attain enlightenment or liberation (*kaivalya*). Yoga philosophy explores the fundamental concepts and purposes of yoga, while the physical practice of yoga is a practical manifestation of those philosophical principles. In this physical manifestation, people may practice Yoga for different goals

like physical fitness, gain or improve mental health, or both. Thus, goal can be different for each individual.

2. Data collection (Input)

AI: Data is first collected from various sources in the form of text, audio, videos, and more. It is sorted into categories, such as those that can be read by the algorithms and those that cannot. Assess the quality and accessibility of the data.

Yoga: This can be explained using following sutra:

प्रत्यक्षानुमानागमः प्रमाणानि ॥१.७॥

Right knowledge consists of *pratyakśa* (sense perception), *anumān* (inferences), *pramān* (logic), and *āgama* (verbal testimony). A practitioner gathers knowledge about his body and mind through various poses, meditation and practices. Practitioner also considers any limitations, constraints (illness, physical challenges etc.) he or she may have. He or she understands various *āsanās*, breathing techniques which can be applied. All this creates a baseline for the practitioner.

3. Processing

AI: AI sorts and deciphers the data using algorithms and patterns it has been programmed to learn until it recognizes similar patterns in the data that is being filtered into the system.

Yoga: Practitioner starts applying various techniques involving eight limbs of yoga - *yama* (abstentions, moral restraints); *niyama* (ethical observances); *āsana* (posture); etc.

4. Outcome assessment

AI: After the processing step, the AI can use those complex patterns to predict outcomes in customer behavior and market trends. In this step, the AI is programmed to decide whether specific data is a 'pass' or 'fail'—in other words, does it match previous patterns? That determines outcomes that can be used to make decisions.

Yoga: In Yoga too, introspection happens on the body position, comfort, mental health, consciousness and mindfulness. Observations are made what is working and what is not working.

5. Adjustment (learning)

AI: When data sets are considered a "failure", AI learns from that mistake, and the process is repeated again under different conditions. It may be that the algorithm's rules must be adjusted to suit the data set in question or that the algorithm needs slight alteration. In this step, you might return to the outcomes step to better align with the current data set's conditions.

Yoga: Similarly, in yoga, when a pose doesn't feel right or isn't executed correctly (स्थिरसुखमासनं), adjustments are made. The practice is repeated with new insights, ensuring better alignment and effectiveness. Practitioners adapt their techniques based on feedback and personal experience, refining their practice for improved well-being or in alignment with their individual goal.

6. Completion

AI: Results may be presented in digestible formats like reports, visuals, verbose etc. to help taking informed decisions. Completion may also involve measuring against the set goals, metrics to ensure those are met. It also may involve finding a solution to a business problem for which AI initiative was pursued.

Yoga: At the philosophical level, it means liberation where *puruśa* is freed from *prakṛti.* At the application level, it could be healthy body, improved mental health, experiencing

the increase in consciousness. Thus, it can be a different expectation for different individuals based upon their goals.
In 'Completion' process, it may not be the end of the process for both AI and yoga, but beginning of a new process – अंतः अस्ति प्रारंभः ॥

Other Areas of Integration

In today's world, there are multiple instances where AI and Yoga are complementing each other to drive benefits for practitioners.
AI can not only help in constructing a lesson, but also act as a virtual yoga instructor.
When AI is paired with wearable devices, (like healthband, which is an IoT application), it can provide real-time feedback improving body postures thereby reducing risk of injury. It can also help in monitoring the progress and optimizing the practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while seemingly disparate, Yoga and Artificial Intelligence share intriguing parallels and offer complementary benefits. Yoga, rooted in ancient Indian philosophy, emphasizes inner exploration and self-improvement. AI, a product of modern science, focuses on solving external problems. However, both involve systematic learning, adaptability, and goal-setting.

From a certain perspective, one might say that the only difference between our modern goals of life and those of the ancient India is the technologies we use in attempting to attain them. They tried to achieve the good life through technologies of mantra and ritual, and we use machine-based industrial technologies and computer software. Yoga sūtras, in fact, is primarily a manual for the practitioner rather than an exposition of Yoga philosophy.

Ultimately, whether through AI's intelligent systems or Yoga's meditative discipline, both lead toward a refined, efficient, and optimized state—one for machines and the other for the human self. This evolving synergy between AI and Yoga opens doors to new possibilities in self-improvement, consciousness, and holistic development.
The paper suggests that its analysis only scratches the surface and recommends to conduct a more detailed study and research of yoga sūtras to reveal more parallels with AI concepts and processes.

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An Overview of Food Culture in Ancient India Through the Daśakumāracarita

Manisha Puranik

Introduction

Food is one of the primary needs and it occupies the most important place in human life. In ancient India, people realized the importance of food in the development of civilization. Ancient Indian food culture reflects a rich synthesis of ecological awareness, social values, and spiritual philosophy. Sanskrit texts provide abundant evidence of the dietary habits, culinary practices, and cultural meanings attached to food in early Indian society. Texts such as the Manusmṛti and Arthaśāstra discuss dietary regulations, food purity, and state supervision of food production and trade. Additionally, literary works and Purāṇic texts describe regional dishes, cooking methods, and ritual offerings.

The medical texts like Suśruta Saṁhitā and Caraka Saṁhitā clearly state the physical and mental happiness of individuals depends on the food they take. Having vast geographical area, in India, one can find diversity in food culture. Many Sanskrit authors like Kālidāsa, Bāṇa and Daṇḍin also emphasized the food habits of the people in their works.

In the present paper, an attempt has been made to overview the food habits of Indian people, particularly in the period of the 7th century CE. For this research the principal text used is the Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin which was composed in the 7th century CE. Daṇḍin was a great poet in the court of Pallava dynasty. The text Daśakumāracarita composed by him is unique in its style and the content it has. It gives the details about the food habits of the contemporary period.

It also throws light on culinary art, the cooking utensils used and hospitality practices. The study of Daśakumāracarita gives an overview of food culture in ancient India.

The Daśakumāracarita:

The Daśakumāracarita is a celebrated Sanskrit prose romance composed by the eminent scholar and literary stylist Daṇḍin, who is generally placed in the 7th century CE. This work is regarded as an important example of classical Sanskrit *gadya-kāvya* (ornate prose literature). The narrative revolves around the adventurous experiences of ten princes, including Prince Rājavāhana, who become separated from one another and later recount their extraordinary journeys, encounters, and exploits across different regions of India.

The text provides vivid descriptions of contemporary society, including political life, urban culture, trade, customs, and everyday practices. Through its engaging storytelling and elaborate literary style, Daṇḍin portrays various aspects of early medieval Indian life such as courtly manners, festivals, food habits, and social interactions. Besides its literary significance, the work serves as a valuable cultural document reflecting the social and cultural environment of its time. Therefore, the Daśakumāracarita holds an important place in the study of Sanskrit literature and Indian cultural history.

Food

In the DKC there was no detailed description of the food habits of people from all regions of India. We can collect stray References of contemporary food material and their habits only from the southern part of India.

Daṇḍin has mentioned both types of food, vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Rice or *śāli* can be considered as staple food in the story of Gominī. In the same story, other vegetables and food mentioned with rice were ghee, oil, tamarind, pepper, cinnamon, and ginger as cooking ingredients. Rice with curd spiced with pepper, cinnamon and ginger was served to Śaktikumāra. Also, fragrant and cool buttermilk and sour gruel were served. Water was fumigated with the incense of black aloe wood, having a smell of fresh flowers. In the story of Dhūminī, reference of rice, fruits and roots as a food was found. Some mention of fruits like mangoes, grapes, bananas, wood apples, dates, coconuts sugar cane, *udumbara* and other *kandamūlaphala* was found in the DKC. Daṇḍin has described the preparation of *parmānnam* as boiling rice with milk and sugar.

In the eighth *ucchvāsa* of *daśakumāracarita*, Viśruta killed deer and prepared food. He first killed the deer, then skinned it and then roasted it for a meal. In the story of Dhūminī, at the time of famine, people used to eat roots, flocks of sheep and goats, wild buffaloes, and even cattle. They also ate their servants and children.

From the above-mentioned facts, we can conclude that eating non-vegetarian food was only in exceptional conditions. Otherwise, common people used to eat vegetarian food.

The use of spices can be rarely seen in the DKC. Daṇḍin has referred to asafoetida and cumin seed only.

After the meal, chewing of betel was very common in the society as mentioned in the second *ucchvāsa* of *daśakumāracarita*. We get References of the use of camphor with betel and of aloe-wood incense for perfuming drinking water. Repeated References to the use of sandal paste and camphor can be traced in the DKC.

In the descriptions of royal courts and prosperous cities, Daṇḍin portrays elaborate banquets prepared for kings, nobles, and honored guests. These meals included well-cooked rice dishes, varieties of vegetables, pulses, milk products, and sweets. The presence of ghee (*ghṛta*), curd (*dadhi*), and milk (*kṣīra*) indicates the importance of dairy products in elite cuisine. Such descriptions highlight the prosperity of the royal households and the ceremonial nature of feasting.

Drink

Drinking alcohol was not prohibited at the time of Daṇḍin. In the narration of Apahāravarman, he drank on some occasions, but he was aware of the bad impacts of alcohol. “It is but the nature of drunkenness and over-excitement, to follow even by taking a wrong course their wanted practices”

In the narration of Viśruta, the consumption of alcohol was shown as common in society. Men and women also used to drink alcohol. There was a reference to *pānagoṣthī,* an open space for drinking. Daṇḍin has used some common words for alcohol such as *mada, madhū, and pāna*. He has also explained the advantages of drinking alcohol. Most of the mentions of alcohol consumption were related to royal and noble families.

But alcohol drinking was not recommended by Daṇḍin. In the same ucchvāsa, he tried to narrate the decline of the kingdom by following such types of habits (Kale: 2003, 63).

The Story of Gominī

Śaktikumāra, wanted to find the right bride for himself. So, he began his quest for the perfect wife. With a handful of paddies in his bag, Śaktikumāra went around

asking young women whether they could make sufficient food from one *prastha* of rice. There were none. He soon arrived near the southern bank Kāverī River, where he met Gominī, a lovely woman who accepted his requirements. She carefully pounded the rice he had brought. She sold it as hearth fuel for a goldsmith after separating the husk. She used the money she made to purchase pots and pans, as well as firewood. She poured the gruel into a different container after heating the rice. Her next step was to transform the firewood into charcoal by pouring cold water over it, which she then sold. She purchased gooseberries, oil, tamarind, curds, and ghee with that money.

She made a dish with vegetables and curd using the gruel from earlier. She then removed a leaf from the banana tree in her backyard to use as a serving surface. She gave him two ladles of rice, curry, and ghee. Gominī gave him the remaining rice, curds, and veggies. She offered him a bowlful of aromatic water when he asked for some, and he drank generously. Śaktikumāra was completely satisfied.

Hospitality and Social Etiquette

The narrative frequently emphasizes the cultural value of *atithi-satkāra* (honoring guests). When travelers or distinguished visitors arrive, they are welcomed with refreshing drinks, fruits, and cooked meals. This reflects the broader Indian tradition where food was considered an essential medium of hospitality and social bonding.

Daṇḍin's descriptions of bustling cities mention marketplaces where different kinds of food and beverages were available. Vendors sold sweets, cooked snacks, fruits, and drinks to travelers and townspeople. These References suggests a vibrant urban food economy and the existence of professional cooks and confectioners.

In scenes of celebrations, gardens, and pleasure gatherings, Daṇḍin describes people enjoying sweet drinks, fruits, and delicacies while listening to music and engaging in conversation. Food thus appears as a central element of entertainment and festive culture.

Utensils mentioned in The Daśakumāracarita

Śūrpa - Winnowing basket; Sthālī - Earthen pot; Darvī - Ladle or spoon; Śarāva - Shallow dish or plate; Bhṛṅgāra – Vase; Karaka - Water pot; Karaṇḍaka - Basket or Pot; Mṛdbhāṇḍa - Vessel of clay; Carmaratnabhastrikā - Leather bag; Cullī - Fire stove; Ulūkhala – Morter; Musala - Pestle; Vaṅgerikā - Small basket; Vetra putikā - Cane vessel; Peṭikā - Box

Conclusion

The study of food culture in the Daśakumāracarita reveals that food serves as an important cultural marker, reflecting social practices, and cultural values of ancient India. While the text may not provide exhaustive culinary details, it offers valuable glimpses into the foodways of the period. By combining textual analysis with contextual understanding, we can appreciate the role of food as a social and cultural indicator, contributing to a more detail understanding of the Daśakumāracarita and the society it portrays. Further research could explore specific food items mentioned in the text, or compare food culture within the Daśakumāracarita to other ancient Indian literary works. Although the Daśakumāracarita is not a culinary text, its narrative descriptions provide significant insights into early medieval Indian food culture—highlighting royal banquets, urban food markets, hospitality customs, and the social role of dining. These literary References helps reconstruct the everyday dietary practices and cultural attitudes toward food in classical Sanskrit society.

Note: DKC = full text of the Daśakumāracarita
daśakumāracarita = middle part of full text of the Daśakumāracarita

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Land, Power & Piety: Brahmadeya and the Socio-Economic Structure of Puṇḍradardhana Bhukti during the pãla period

Sagarika

1. Introduction

Time stands witness to the reality of '*Bhumi'*, symbolizing the canvas across which the history of power was delineated. India's ancient civilization forms a distinct geographical and cultural unit that once included the nation-states of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. The fertile northern alluvial plain of the Ganga and its tributaries is a major geographical zone of the subcontinent, emerging as the cradle of civilization. The eastern portion included the Ganga and Brahmaputra delta, which corresponds to the research region, Puṇḍravardhana Bhuktī, which covered sections of the West Dinajpur district of West Bengal, India, and the present-day Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Dhaka Divisions of Bangladesh (Niyogi 1967). *Puṇḍravardhana*, named after the *Puṇḍra* people, is one of the most significant territorial divisions of ancient Bengal, whose importance was further amplified with the rise of the Pālas in the early medieval era. The foundation of the Pāla dynasty in the mid-eighth century A.D. ushered an era of political integration and cultural renaissance (Majumdar 1943a). Epigraphic evidence, particularly copper plate inscriptions, provides crucial information about royal grants and the genealogies of the Pāla rulers (Baghchi 1993).

2. Aims & Objectives

The present study conducts a comprehensive analysis of Pāla copper-plate charters from Puṇḍravardhana Bhuktī to determine the nature and scope of Pāla land grants—ranging from contiguous agrarian villages and pastures to forests and wastelands—and to elucidate the royal criteria and prerogatives that governed their allocation. It examines the socio-economic consequences of these endowments by tracing shifts in agricultural regimes, trade networks, and the economic status of cultivators, merchants, and marginal groups. Concurrently, it delineates the legal immunities and fiscal privileges—tax exemptions, jurisdictional authority, and control over natural and market resources—bestowed upon donees, and evaluates how these entitlements engendered a stratified landed elite that reshaped local governance and communal hierarchies.

Extending this inquiry, the study probes the religious and cultural impact of land donations to Brahmins, temples, and monastic institutions, assessing their role in propagating Brahmanical ritual, founding agrahāras and temple complexes, and integrating indigenous cults into a Sanskritic milieu. A comparative analysis of Gupta-era and Pāla-era copper-plate grants further illuminates' continuities and divergences in administrative formality, ideological intent, and the scale of royal patronage. Finally, situated within the broader narrative of Pāla political history, this research demonstrates how strategic land endowments functioned as instruments of dynastic legitimation, frontier consolidation, and alliance-building, even as they ultimately contributed to the decentralized landlordism that presaged the dynasty's fragmentation.

3. Previous Research

The study of Bengal's history and geography gained momentum during British colonial rule, with foundational works by scholars such as E. Lethbridge on history and geography of Bengal (1874) and H. Arden Wood's book on the tribes of ancient Bengal (1884). Ethnographic and cartographic surveys in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

further enriched the discourse. Early contributions to Pāla historiography include Akshay Kumar Maitreya's *Gauḍalekhamala* (1912), a compilation of inscriptions, and F.J. Mohan's *The Early History of Bengal* (1925), which offered a comprehensive analysis of the region's formative period. Significant advances were made by Pramode Lal Paul's work the Early History of Bengal (1939), Bimal Churn Law on tribes in India (1943), and R.C. Majumdar, whose works—*The History of Bengal Vol I* and *Vol II* (1943) and *The History of Ancient Bengal* (1971)—remain seminal. B.C. Sen and Ramaranjan Mukherji contributed to epigraphic studies, while Bhakat Prasad Mazumdar and Kamrunnesa Islam explored socio-economic structures. Mazumdar's Socio-Economic History of Northern India (1966) and Mukherji and Maithy's Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions (1967) have been foundational.

Subsequent scholarship, including R.D. Banerji's *The Pālas of Bengal* (1973) and D.C. Sircar's research on land tenure, deepened understanding of Pāla governance and agrarian systems. R.S. Sharma's Indian Feudalism (1965), Urban Decay in India c. 300–1200 (1987), Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages in India (1992), The Kali Age and the Feudal Order: Essays on Early Medieval India (1999), and his edited volume The Feudal Order: State, Society, and Ideology in Early Medieval India (2016) have profoundly shaped our understanding of early medieval socio-economic change. B.D Chattopadhyay's works have provided a new perspective countering R.S Sharma (1994). More recently, scholars such as Jugnu Bagchi, Manjeet Singh, and Jasmer Singh have offered new perspectives critically reassessing Pāla rule within the wider framework of early medieval India.

4. Concept of Land Grants in Early Medieval India

The ideology of *dāna*, especially bhūmidāna, traces to Vedic and Purāṇic texts. The *Anuśāsana Parva* (Mahābhārata) praises land gifts as supremely meritorious (Pandey 1912). Smṛiti literature (Viṣṇu, Bṛhaspati, Yājñavalkya) and Purāṇas (Matsya) reinforced the sacrality of land donations (Sharma 1983a). Copper plate charters, or *Tāmraśāsanas*, served as durable legal documents formalizing these land grants. Their widespread use reflects the institutionalization of *Bhūmidāna* in early medieval administration. The *Bhojaprabandha* humorously notes a shortage of copper due to the volume of such grants (Singh 2021). These records classified land gifts—*deya-deya*, *deva-daya*, and *brahmadeya*—and in South India, *agrahāras*. *Tāmraśāsanas* are grouped into three types: *dāna-śāsana* (gift records), *prasanna-śāsana* (favours), and *jaya-patra* (legal verdicts), with gift records being most common (Hashmi and Singh 2023). Thus, *Bhūmidāna* functioned as both a spiritual offering and a tool of socio-political control.

5. Historical Geography

Puṇḍravardhana Bhuktī, situated in North Bengal across present-day Bangladesh and West Bengal, was a significant administrative and cultural region in early medieval Bengal. Named after the Puṇḍra tribe, it occupied a strategic location amidst fertile alluvial plains and vital waterways (Law 1943). Early Vedic texts viewed Bengal as unsuitable for Brahmins, with the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* prescribing penalties for Brahmins visiting regions like Puṇḍra and Vaṅga. Bengal remained outside the Vedic fold until the Gupta period, which marked the beginnings of its Brahmanization (Niyogi 1967). The Pāla era saw intensified settlement through land grants, facilitating the assimilation of local cults into the Brahmanical framework (Sircar 1969).

Bengal's natural divisions were shaped by its rivers, defining ecological zones and trade routes. Puṇḍravardhana, part of Varendrī, was agriculturally rich, with flood-fed soils supporting dense populations and crops like rice and jute (Majumdar 1943b).

Its location along major trade routes and proximity to the Bay of Bengal fostered urban centres such as Puṇḍranagara (Mahasthān), a hub for rice, textiles, and goods. Archaeological finds at Mahasthān, including Brahmī-inscribed slabs, confirm its status as the Bhukti capital. While the Mahābhārata and dharma texts describe the Puṇḍras as semi-Āryan, Gupta rule elevated Puṇḍravardhana to a major administrative unit—a role it maintained under the Pāla and Sena dynasties (Targa 1999; Niyogi 1967).

6. Pala Land Grant Inscriptions in Pundravardhan Bhukti

6.1. Nature & Craftsmanship

Pāla copper-plate charters (*rāja-śāsanas*) were legally binding, hereditary documents protected by severe penalties against forgery. Each plate—12–16 inches long—bore an elaborate seal (pointed apex, beaded circle with *śaṅkha*, *dharmacakra* flanked by deer), reflecting imperial authority. Inscribed with 60–70 lines in precise script, charters opened with *Om Svasti* (occasionally *Ni*) and included genealogies. Many were issued from *Jayaskandhavaras*—itinerant royal camps: Pataliputra, Mudgagiri, Auddalakhataka, Haradhama, Bata-parvatika, Vilāspur, Ramavatinagara—signifying Pāla mobility and strategic presence. Figures 1 and 2 present the typical appearance of copper plates and seals issued by the Pāla rulers.

6.2. Distribution & Corpus

Of sixteen surviving Pāla grants, ten emanate from Puṇḍravardhana Bhuktī (three in Srinagara, two in Tira, one in Nagara). Key inscriptions include:

1. Khalimpur Plate of Dharmapāla (Gottingen 1920, 243-53)
2. Jagajjīvanpur Plate of Mahendrapāla (Ramesh and Subramonia 1977, 6-29)
3. Bhaturia Plate of Rājyapāla (Sircar 1963, 150-55)
4. Jajilpara Plate of Gopāla II (Majumdar and Misra 1951, 137-44)
5. Belwa Plates of Mahīpāla I (Sircar 1951, 1-13)
6. Bangarh Plates of Mahīpāla I (Banerji 1917, 324-30)
7. Belwa Plate of Vigrahapāla III (Sircar 1951, 1-13)
8. Amgachhi Plates of Vigrahapāla III (Banerji 1920, 293-310)
9. Manahali Plate of Madanapāla (Vasu 1900, 66-74)
10. Rajibpur Plate of Gopāla III & Madanapāla (Fururi 2015, 39-61)

These charters detail landholdings—villages, pastures, orchards, fishing ponds—and enumerate privileges: tax exemptions (*bhāga*, *bhoga*, *kara*, *hiraṇya*), immunity from troop quartering, and judicial rights. They reflect a legal-ritual template inherited from Gupta precedents but elaborated in scale and ceremonialism under the Pālas (Majumdar 1971; Sircar 1969).

Figure 1: Rajibpur Copper plate Inscription of Gopāla III and Madanapāla (Obverse and Reverse) (Fururi 2015)

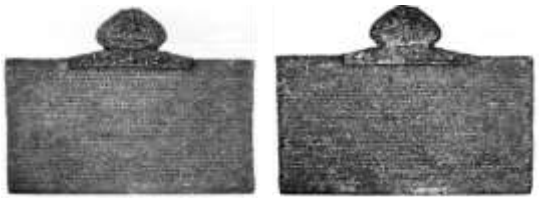

Figure 2: Seal of Rajibpur Copper plate Inscription of Gopāla III and Madanapāla (Fururi 2015).

7. Discrepancies in Pala Genealogy

7.1. Lineal and collateral branches

In the wake of Devapāla's death (c. 850 CE), Pāla inscriptions reveal a concerted effort to recast the dynasty's lineage in favor of Dharmapāla's younger brother, Vākpāla. The Khalimpur plate of Dharmapāla—our earliest extant record—lists Devapāla as the direct successor in an unbroken descent from Gopāla I through Ramapāla (lines 49–58) (Gottingen 1920). By contrast, later grants most notably the Bangarh (Mahīpāla I, year 9), Belwa and Amgachhi (Vigrahapāla III, yrs 11–12), Jajilpara (Gopāla II, year 6), and Rajibpur (Gopāla III & Madanapāla, year 2)—systematically omit Devapāla and his sons. Instead, their pedigrees leap from Dharmapāla, Vākpāla, Jayapāla , Vigrahapāla I… onward, celebrating each collateral ruler in lavish panegyrics while rendering Devapāla's line invisible.

This blanking of Devapāla's heirs extends beyond mere omission of names. Verses 13–14 and 19–21 of the Manhali plate of Madanapāla deliberately truncate genealogical detail precisely where Devapāla's exploits and lineage would appear, whereas the corresponding passage in the Amgachhi and Dinajpur plates is fully preserved. Such selective redaction suggests an active policy of "genealogical pruning," one designed to foreground the collateral branch's legitimacy and suppress memories of Devapāla's direct descendants.

This ideological reshaping achieved its greatest consolidation under Mahīpāla I (c. 988–1038 CE) and his successors, whose grants reinforce Vākpāla's primacy long after any immediate contest for the throne had subsided. By embedding the collateral genealogy in every major charter issued from Jayaskandhavara camps—Mudgagiri for Devapāla's successors, Ramavatinagara for Madanapāla—the Pāla court effectively naturalized Vākpāla's line as the dynasty's sole legitimate branch.

7.2. Rediscovery of sons of Devpāla

The mid-20th century publication of two "lost" charters radically altered our understanding of Pāla succession. The Jagajjīvanpur (Malda) plate of Mahendrapāla, issued in his 7th regnal year, explicitly names Devapāla's queen Vikramā—daughter of the Chāhamāna ruler Durlabha—as his mother (verses. 6, 11), and identifies himself as Devapāla's son. Likewise, the Mirzāpur (Lucknow Museum) plate of Śūrapāla I (year 3) proclaims his filiation from Devapāla, directly contradicting the centuries of collateral-only genealogies.

These plates not only recover the existence of Devapāla's heirs but also restore critical biographical details. Mahendrapāla's charter situates his grant in Pūṇḍravardhana Bhukti from the camp at Auddalakhaṭaka (Bhaṅgīrāthī banks), while Śūrapāla issues his from a separate court in Śṛṅgāra Bhukti. The dual issuance implies not merely a dynastic

"forgetting," but an actual bifurcation of royal authority, with concurrent administrations acknowledging rival Pāla claimants in different provinces.

Moreover, these rediscovered texts correct long-standing scholarly errors—D. C. Sircar's misattribution of Mahendrapāla to the Pratīhāras, for instance—and demand a reevaluation of Pāla chronology. By reinserting Devapāla's direct line back into the epigraphic record, the Jagajjīvanpur and Mirzāpur plates illuminate a brief but genuine succession that had been actively effaced by later chroniclers.

7.3. Ministerial Politics & Legitimacy

Beyond pure dynastic rivalry, the composition of Pāla genealogy was deeply entangled with ministerial agendas. Charters routinely close with the names of high-ranking *dutakas* and engravers—Bhimadeva in the Manhali plate, Yaśodasa in the Bhaturia inscription, Guravamiśra in Badal Pillar verse 19—revealing the Brahmin and warrior elites who brokered royal favor (Vasy 1900: Gottingen 1917). The exclusion of Devapāla's sons from Vākpāla-affiliated grants correlates with the known alignments of these functionaries, suggesting that those with vested interests in the collateral line leveraged their office to rewrite succession.

Courtly patronage also explains the divergent issuance locales. Mahendrapāla's grant from Pūṇḍravardhana and Śūrapāla's from Śṛṅgāra Bhukti reflect competing ministerial centres, each with its own cadre of Brahmin scribes and local power-brokers. The prestige accorded to Śūrapāla in the Badal Pillar Inscription—an elite Brahmin compilation praising five generations of Pāla patrons—further indicates that Śūrapāla's faction retained substantial influence among liturgical elites, even as the main corpus of copper plates marginalized him.

These ministerial dynamics prevented the emergence of a unified narrative and weakened central cohesion. By sanctioning simultaneous grants under rival princes and endorsing selective genealogies, the Brahminical and warrior elite not only shaped the contours of Pāla legitimacy but also inadvertently sowed the seeds for later fragmentation and external incursions.

8. Land and Economy in Pundravardhan

8.1. Brahmadeya as a Political and Economic Instrument

Under the Pāla dynasty (8^{th} to 12^{th} century CE), land served not only as an economic resource but also as a pivotal tool of statecraft. The copper plate inscriptions issued during their rule, especially in the region of Puṇḍravardhana Bhuktī, reveal how land grants were used strategically to reinforce royal authority and facilitate agrarian expansion. By transferring land along with extensive fiscal and administrative rights to Brahmins and religious institutions, the Pālas effectively integrated dharma into governance and encouraged the establishment of agrarian settlements in previously uncultivated or sparsely populated regions (Yadav 2016).

These grants were far more than pious donations; they were instruments of state-building. The Khalimpur copper plate of Dharmapāla, which records the grant of four villages to Lāṭa Brahmins, is a foundational example. Such grants often included vast tracts of territory, comprising farmland, pastures, orchards, forests, marketplaces (*hattikā*), and even saline tracts (*sa-gartta-uṣara*), all of which were transferred with jurisdictional immunities and tax privileges (Sircar 1951). Notably, these charters included References to the *bhūmi-chchhidra* principle, encouraging the transformation of wastelands into productive agricultural units.

8.2. Legal Immunities and Landlordism

The Pāla charters typically conferred a suite of rights that collectively constituted near-total authority over the granted land. These included judicial revenues like fines for minor offences (*daśāpacāra*), rights to goods recovered from theft (*sa-chaura-oddharaṇa*), and immunities from entry by state officials (*chāṭas and bhaṭas*). These faculties were not limited to fiscal privileges but also carried implications for political sovereignty, effectively allowing the donees to act as local lords (Targa 1999). While the charters did not explicitly authorize capital punishment, they nonetheless enabled the beneficiaries to exact and retain fines, settle disputes, and administer local justice. This configuration of rights thus marked a shift from central royal control to localized power, fostering the emergence of a landed elite.

8.3. Agrarian Expansion and Settlement

The grant of land under the *bhūmi-chchhidra* clause served as a critical mechanism for expanding the agrarian frontier in North Bengal. This tradition, emphasizing the cultivation of fallow or forested land, reveals how the state facilitated settlement growth and agricultural intensification. Grants were often made to immigrant Brahmins, who were presumed to bring with them superior agricultural knowledge and techniques (Kosambi 1956). D.D. Kosambi and R.S. Sharma emphasized that these Brahmins, hailing from the Gangetic plains, introduced improved tools, crops, and seasonal farming practices. Their arrival catalysed new village formations, sometimes by encouraging tribal communities to adopt sedentary agricultural lifestyles (Sharma 2001). Temples and religious establishments often became central to this process. With the aid of *devadāna* and *brahmadeya* grants, these institutions amassed substantial landholdings and acted as local economic centres (Veluthat 2011). For example, the Malda plate of Madanapāla uniquely records the donation of an urban settlement (*Nandadīrghikā*) for a Buddhist vihāra, reflecting the diversity of donated units (Ramesh and Subramonia 1977, 6-29).

8.4. Decentralization and Emergence of Brahmin Landlords

These land grants were not limited to economic redistribution; they were also foundational to the socio-political transformation of early medieval Bengal. The Pāla polity, as B.D. Chattopadhyay suggests, developed a feudal structure wherein landlords—often Brahmins—extracted surplus from peasants through religious and juridical authority (1994). These recipients were effectively transformed into landed intermediaries, possessing seigniorial rights that went far beyond mere ownership. Their power encompassed tax collection (*bhāga, bhoga, kara, hiraṇya*), the imposition of rents (*nikara*), and local dispute resolution. This configuration undermined centralized state authority while institutionalizing a new elite landholding class (Islam 1966; Sharma 1983b).

Grants often emphasized the complete relinquishment of state control, using phrases like *"akiñcit-pragrādhya*" (complete exemption from taxation) and *"samasta-bhagābhogakara-hiraṇya-ādi-pratyāya-sameta*," indicating the full transfer of royal dues. Despite debates around the meaning of *hiraṇya*—whether it referred to gold or coin revenue—there is consensus that these exemptions symbolized the profound weakening of royal fiscal sovereignty (Sircar 1970).

8.5. Rights over Natural and Non-Agricultural Resources

Beyond cultivable land, the grants frequently included control over a range of natural resources and commercial spaces. Mango and madhuka trees, pits for mining, salt

tracts, and water bodies for fishing were all covered under the grants. The inclusion of "hattika" (market revenues) and "*talapātaka*" (perhaps low-lying wetland areas) in the Khalimpur grant reveals how these rights extended into the realm of commerce and resource management (Sircar 1951).

In many cases, the charters detailed the physical attributes of the land, noting features such as grasslands, pasture areas, shrubbery, pits, barren tracts, and forested areas. This exhaustive inventory not only ensured that every economic aspect of the land was covered but also reflected an administrative sophistication in cataloguing territorial assets.

8.6. Taxation and State Withdrawal

The complete transfer of taxation rights is one of the most critical aspects of the Pāla land grants. The king, once the primary tax-collector and guarantor of order, essentially ceded this authority to the grantees. This had significant consequences for the state's revenue system and its capacity to govern directly. In the centralized Gupta model, taxes were fixed based on crop yields, land types, and seasonal variations. However, under the Pālas, the grantees could levy taxes independently, often with no cap or oversight. This potentially exploitative arrangement shifted the burden onto the peasantry, which remained tied to the land under the economic and judicial authority of their new overlords (Majumdar 1971; Sharma 2001).

8.7. Contesting Theories of Decline and Continuity

Historians remain divided on the broader implications of these land grants. R.S. Sharma and D.D. Kosambi see them as indicators of feudal decay and administrative fragmentation, pointing to the erosion of urban centers, the rise of landed elites, and the decline of trade. They interpret this period as one of decline, aligning it with the Hindu conception of Kali Yuga—an age of disorder. Conversely, scholars like B.D. Chattopadhyay highlight the emergence of vibrant regional polities and urban resilience. He underscores that the transformation was not uniform decay but a reconfiguration of political and economic systems (Chattopadhyay 2016).

8.8. Reconfiguring Governance and Society

The Pāla period marked a decisive shift in the governance and socio-economic structure of North Bengal. Through systematic and far-reaching land grants, the state outsourced fiscal and administrative authority, fostering new centres of agrarian and religious power. The recipients—predominantly Brahmins and religious institutions—emerged as key intermediaries, reshaping local economies and hierarchies. These developments helped consolidate the Pāla state while planting the seeds of rural landlordism that would characterize early medieval India. The agrarian economy, fuelled by these land grants, became the backbone of the Pāla realm, demonstrating the enduring link between land, power, and religious ideology.

9. Brahmanization

9.1 Historical Context and Early Brahmin Presence

Early Vedic texts portrayed Bengal—particularly the marshy lands inhabited by the *Puṇḍras*—as impure and unsuitable for Brahmins, necessitating penitential rites such as the Punastoma or Sarvopasṛṣṭha for any visitor to atone for crossing into these "unclean" territories (Niyogi 1967). Nonetheless, by the fifth century CE, Gupta rulers had begun to issue land grants that encouraged Brahmin migration into North Bengal. Particularly, Kumaragupta I's Damodarpur inscriptions record grants of fertile Varendrī

lands to Brahmins, establishing a precedent that the Pāla rulers would later expand upon. This gradual influx introduced Vedic rituals and hierarchical social structures to a region historically peripheral to Āryāvarta, setting the stage for the Pāla-era Brahmanisation policy.

9.2. Brahmanisation under Dharmapāla and Genealogical Precision

Under Dharmapāla (late 8th century CE), Brahmanisation became a formal strategy enacted through copper plate charters. His Khalimpur copper plate endows four villages to Lāṭa Brahmins tasked with constructing and maintaining a *Śaiva* temple, embedding Vedic ritual practice into local religious life without naming individual recipients but clearly implying their Vedic responsibilities. More specifically, Suvarnarekha—a master of the *Saṃhitās*, *Smṛti*, and Purāṇas—received the village of Karanja, as recorded in Caturbhuja's *Haricharitakavya*. Although his exact provenance (Madhyadeśa or Rāḍha) is not stated, Suvarnarekha's Sanskritic scholarship exemplifies Dharmapāla's strategy of importing learned Brahmins to codify Vedic norms in Puṇḍravardhana.

By Gopāla II's seventh regnal year, Pāla charters exhibit precise genealogical detail to legitimize land grants. The Jajjilpara plate grants Sihali village to Sridhara Śarman, explicitly identifying him as a Brahmachāri of the Vājasaneya Śākha (Śukla Yajurveda), belonging to the Kāśyapa gotra with *Avatsa* and *Nādhurva pravaras*. It traces his lineage—grandfather Nāga, father Śrīgarbha—and specifies that the grant coincided with Uttarāyaṇa Saṅkrānti (the winter solstice Ganges bath), thereby fusing cosmic ritual timing with political authority. This level of genealogical precision, coupled with astrological timing, marks one of the earliest instances in North Bengal where land-grant epigraphy explicitly records Brahmin credentials.

9.3. Agrahāras and Genealogical Land Grants under Gopāla III and Madanapāla

Building on earlier foundations, Gopāla III and his successor Madanapāla established Brahmin settlements (agrahāras) that transformed the rural economy and cultural life of Puṇḍravardhana. The Rajibpur plate of Gopāla III endows Bhaṭṭaputra Muraripurata Śarman—a pandita of the Vatsa gotra whose pravara lineage runs through Aurva, Cyavana, Bhargava, Jamadagnya, and Apnavat—with 300 hallavarta units of land as dakṣiṇā for a hemasva-mahadāna (golden horse gift). Muraripurata, the son of Medhatithirata (grandson of Mahadevarata, great-grandson of Dhatridhararata), was a co-disciple of Dinakara and a scholar of the Aśvalāyana Śākha (Ṛgveda), Tantratikā, logic, and grammar. This gift—bestowed after the king's Ganges bath on Manvantara's first full moon in Magha—demonstrates how lineage, ritual performance, and agrarian investment were intertwined. Madanapāla's subsequent plate extends grants to Muraripurata's grandson, Bhaṭṭaputra Mahesvararata Śarman (also of the Vatsa gotra with identical pravaras), further solidifying this family's pivotal role in Brahmanical, agricultural, and administrative networks.

Additional genealogical endowments under Madanapāla and Vigrahapāla III elaborate this trend. The Manahali plate (eighth year of Madanapāla) grants land to Vātecārassvāmīcārman, who belongs to the Kauṭhūmi Śākha (Sāma veda) and the Kauṭsa gotra with Caṇḍilya and Asitadevala pravaras; his lineage is traced from Cauukasvāmīcārman (father) to Prajāpatisvāmīcārman (grandfather) and Vatsasvāmīcārman (great-grandfather). This grant—issued after a lunar eclipse during the royal Ganges bath—underscores both his detailed Vedic credentials and the importance of celestial auspiciousness. Similarly, Vigrahapāla III's Amgachhi plate (twelfth year) records a grant to Khōduladeva-śarman, identified as the son of

Mahopādhyāya Arkadeva-śarman and grandson of Padmāvanadeva. Khōduladeva-śarman belongs to the Śandilya gotra with Śandilya**,** Āśiā, and Devala pravaras, is a student of the Kauṭhūmi Śākha (Sāma veda), and is versed in Mīmāṃsā, Vyākaraṇa, and Tarka-vidyā. His grant—bestowed after another Ganges bath during a lunar eclipse—further illustrates the intertwining of precise genealogy and astrological ritualization.

9.4. Brahmin Endowments, Gotra–Pravara Details, and Astrological Timing

Mahipāla I's grants further exemplify the Pāla emphasis on both lineage and celestial sanction. His fifth regnal year Belwa plate endows three localities—Osinna-Kaivarṭavṛtti, Nandiśvaminī, and Ganneśvara—to Jivadharadeva-śarman, of the Hastidāsa gotra with Angirasa**,** Ambariṣa**,** and Yauvanāsva pravaras, and identifies him as the son of Dhiresvaradeva-śarman and grandson of Viṣṇudeva-deva-śarman. Dated to Viśva-Saṅkrānti (solar equinox) and accompanied by a royal sacred bath, this grant merges societal prestige with ritual legitimacy, documenting lineage alongside land allocation.

In Mahipāla I's ninth year, the Bangarh plate grants land to Kṛṣṇa-Āditya-śarman—son of Bhaṭṭaputra Madhusūdhana and grandson of Bhaṭṭaputra Riśikeś—of the Pārāśara gotra, renowned for his mastery of Mīmāṃsā, Vyākaraṇa, and Tarka-vidyā (Yajur veda) (Banerji, 1917). Issued from the royal camp after a Ganges bath on Viśva-Saṅkrānti during a solar eclipse, the charter notes that both donee and documenting minister Dudhaka share the Bhaṭṭa gotra, marking a departure from earlier Kāśyapa-gotra predominance in North Bengal grants. This specificity affirms ritual authority and highlights evolving Brahmanical networks under Mahipāla I.

Finally, Vigrahapāla III's Belwa plate (eleventh year) grants portions of Loni Kama village to Jayanandadeva-śarman, of the Bhāradvāja gotra with Bhāradvāja, Aṅgirasa, and Bārhaspatya pravaras; he is identified as the son of Śrīpatideva, grandson of Hṛṣīkēśadeva, and great-grandson of Mitrakaradeva. A student of the Pippalāda Śākha and scholar of Mīmāṃsā and Tarka-vidyā, Jayanandadeva-śarman received this grant after Mahipāla I's sacred bath on Viśva-Saṅkrānti, illustrating how lineage details and astrological timing together validated Brahmin status and Brahmanical integration in Puṇḍravardhana Bhukti's socio-religious landscape.

9.5. Brahmin Ministers, Intellectual Renewal, and Religious Pluralism

Brahmin ministers were pivotal in extending Brahmanisation through both political-military prowess and ritual patronage. Narāyanavarman, Dharmapāla's Mahāsāmantādhipati, secured lands for a Śaiva temple via the Khalimpur plate, reflecting how ministerial influence facilitated religious integration. The Badal Pillar inscription of the Garga family (Sandilya gotra) claims that Brahmin Garga appointed Dharmapāla as "regent of the east and sovereign of all regions," indicating that Brahmins—through scholarship and military prowess—could wield power comparable to the king. Similarly, Yasōdāsa's Bhaturia inscription credits his military victories against Utkalas, Dravidas, Gurjara-Pratihāras, and Hunas as the source of wealth that endowed Madhusvara village for Śiva worship, highlighting the fusion of martial success and ritual patronage in diffusing Sanskritic customs.

Concurrently, an intellectual revival among Bengal's Brahmins emerged. Haraprasad Shastri notes that, unlike their counterparts elsewhere, Bengal's Brahmins prioritized understanding mantras' meanings alongside recitation. This philosophical emphasis fostered a Vedic "revivalism" that foregrounded epistemology over rote ritualism. Figures such as Nāradā's descendants—Nugadāśa Āchārya and Hālāyudha

(author of the first Vedic commentaries in the 12th century *Brahmaṇa Sarvasva*)—attest to this evolving scholarly ethos.

Despite their Brahmanical focus, the Pāla court-maintained support for Buddhist institutions, ensuring a pluralistic polity. The Jagajjīvanpur plate (Mahendrapāla I's seventh year) endows Nandanīrghikā town to sustain a vihāra and its monastic community, indicating that Buddhist scholarship remained central to state interests. Conversely, Śaiva endowments—such as Rajyapāla's Bhaturia slab granting Madhusvara village for a Vṛṣabhadhvaja (Śiva) temple under minister Yasōdāsa's patronage—demonstrate how Brahmanical and Buddhist networks were mobilized in tandem to reinforce Pāla authority. Temples, viharas, and agrahāras thus formed an integrated infrastructure that supported both religious communities and imperial administration.

10. Comparative Analysis: Pala vs. Gupta Dynasties' Land Grants

Copper plate inscriptions serve as foundational sources for reconstructing early medieval Indian administrative history. In Puṇḍravardhana Bhuktī, both the Guptas and Pālas employed land grants not solely for economic redistribution but as potent instruments to legitimize royal authority, structure ritual life, and shape socio-political hierarchies. These records reflect significant shifts in statecraft, religious patronage, and bureaucratic sophistication over time, revealing how kingship evolved from a pragmatic mode of governance under the Guptas to a more ideologically embedded and ceremonially conscious institution under the Pālas. Figure 3 depicts copper plate inscriptions from both the Pāla and Gupta periods. Here's a refined version of your text for improved clarity, grammar, and style:

The Dhanaidaha Copper-Plate Inscription dates to the 113th year of the Gupta era, during the reign of Kumaragupta I (Basak 1923, 345-48). Five copper plates from the Gupta period were discovered in Damodarpur in the early 20th century, all attributed to the reign of the Gupta monarchs Kumaragupta I and Budhagupta (Basak 1920,113-45). The Sultanpur Copper-Plate Inscription is also dated to the 113th year of the Gupta era, corresponding to 440 A.D (Sanyal 1960, 58-66). These copper plates were issued in the Puṇḍravardhana Bhukti.

10.1. Physical Characteristics of Copper Plates

Physically, the copper plates from the Gupta period are significantly smaller and more fragile than those from the Pāla era. The five Damodarpur plates, issued during the reigns of Kumaragupta I and Buddhagupta, range in size from approximately 6 × 3.6 inches to 7.75 × 3.25 inches, with weights varying between 11 and 27 *tolas*. These plates are thin, lacking reinforced rims, and have suffered considerable corrosion over time. The Dhanaidahahaha and Sultanpur plates, both dated to 440 CE (113 Gupta era), show similar fragility. In contrast, the Pāla copper plates—such as those issued by Dharmapāla, Mahipāla I, Vigrahapāla III, and others—are considerably larger (many measuring over 14 inches in length and width) and thicker, which has aided their preservation. The inscriptions on these plates are deep and clear, and the seals are often artistically elaborate, typically affixed at the top of the plate and featuring symbolic Buddhist imagery such as the *dharmachakra* flanked by gazelles, as well as the name of the issuing monarch.

Artistically, the seals of the Gupta period are modest, with minimal ornamentation, and the only known intact example appears on Damodarpur Plate No. 4. It contains simple motifs such as a trident and parallel lines. By contrast, Pāla seals are striking for their intricate designs and symbolic content. These include the Buddhist

wheel of law, a pedestal, a *chhatra*, and couchant deer, emphasizing the dynasty's Buddhist affiliations and the importance of religious symbolism in statecraft.

10.2. Language and Script Evolution

In terms of language and script, both Gupta and Pāla copper plates were composed in Sanskrit. However, their scripts evolved over time. The Guptas used the Gupta Brahmi or late Brahmi script, a standardized and formal script consistent with their administrative centralization. The Pāla period, by contrast, reflects linguistic transition and regional adaptation. Early Pāla inscriptions used a modified form of Devanagari known as Proto-Bengali, while later inscriptions adopted the Gaudiya script. This evolution highlights the increasing localization of governance and cultural integration under the Pālas, whose inscriptions often exhibit a blend of formality and vernacular expression.

10.3. Nature and Scale of Land Donations

The nature and scale of land donations documented in these copper plates also evolved significantly between the Gupta and Pāla periods. During the Gupta era, land grants were more akin to private donations and typically involved small parcels of land. These were often granted to Brahmins for religious duties, especially the performance of sacrifices, and were issued by government officials rather than directly by the emperor. Notably, the Dhanaidaha plate records a donation to a Sāmavēdin Brāhmaṇa named Varahā-svāmin, although much of the inscription has been lost due to erosion. The Gupta grants rarely mention the beneficiaries in detail and do not confer broader administrative or economic rights.

In contrast, the Pāla land grants are expansive, detailed, and systematically recorded. They include precise measurements using units such as *kulya, droṇa, kakānī, adamāna*, and *ādhāvāpa*. For instance, Dharmapāla's Khalimpur plate documents the donation of four entire villages, while others—such as the Amgachhi and Rajibpur plates—enumerate specific land units ranging from a few *kulyas* to hundreds of cultivatable units. These records not only name the donees and their genealogies but also often provide their place of origin, underscoring a highly developed sense of administrative record-keeping and historical consciousness.

10.4. Administrative Structures

The administrative structures reflected in these copper plates also indicate a shift from centralization to a more decentralized framework. Under the Guptas, governance was hierarchical and tightly controlled. The emperor appointed governors (*tat-pāda-parigrihīta*) to oversee provinces such as Puṇḍravardhana, who in turn appointed district officers (*Viśayapatis*) like the *kumārāmātya* or *āyukta*. These officers operated from a central headquarters (*adhiṣṭhāna*) and were supported by a board of advisers (*samvyavahāra*) representing various social groups: merchants, artisans, and scribes. Local rural institutions such as *mahattaras, aṣṭa-kula-adhikaraṇas, and grāmikas* played a consultative role, particularly in land matters.

The Pāla administration, while still maintaining imperial oversight, featured a broader and more complex bureaucracy. Their inscriptions list an extensive array of officials, including ministers (*rājāmātya*, *mahākumāramātya*), military commanders (*mahāsēnāpati*), judicial officers (*mahādaṇḍanāyaka*, *dāsāparādhika*), tax officials (*śaulkika*), and local governors (*rājasthān-ōparika, kōṭṭapāla*). The Pāla charters clearly demarcate the rights and jurisdictions of these officers, often specifying that the grantees were to be free from interference by any state functionaries. This suggests not only an

advanced administrative apparatus but also the formal recognition of the autonomy of religious and landed beneficiaries.

10.5. Socio-Economic and Cultural Implications

From a socio-economic and cultural perspective, the Gupta grants reflect a relatively restrained role of the state in rural transformation. The primary emphasis was on royal authority and ritual patronage, with limited documentation of local society beyond administrative titles. In contrast, the Pāla charters demonstrate a broader socio-economic engagement. They detail the identities and statuses of the beneficiaries, indicate local administrative arrangements, and reflect a complex interplay between center and periphery. The gradual shift to regional scripts, inclusion of donor genealogies, and increased volume of land transactions point to a richer, more diverse social landscape.

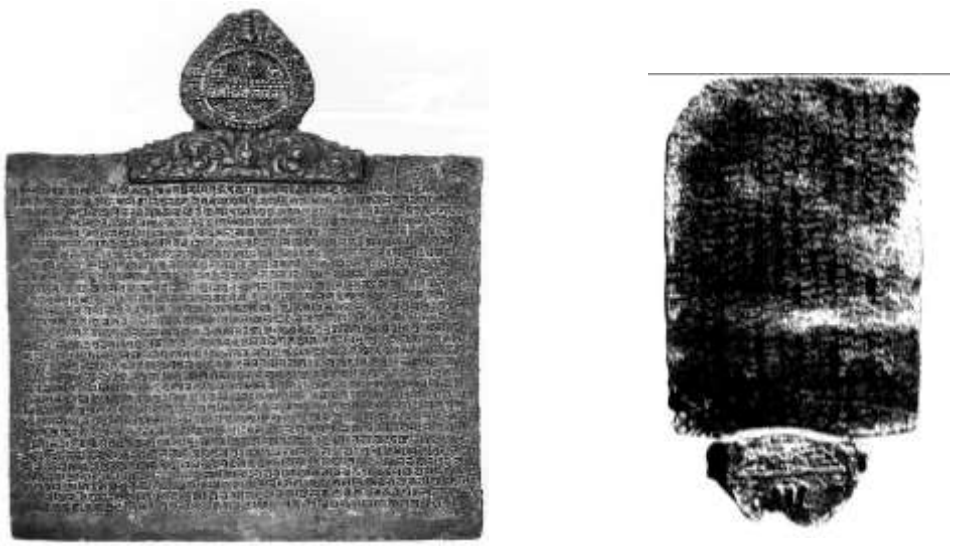

Figure 3: The Damodarpur Copperplate of Vishnugupta (6th century AD) & Rajibpur Copperplate of Gopāla III (Obverse) (Basak 1920; Fururi 2015).

12. Conclusion

The Pāla dynasty's systematic use of copper-plate land grants in Puṇḍravardhana Bhuktī represents a deliberate fusion of political authority, religious ideology, and administrative innovation: by endowing vast villages, pastures, forests, and even wastelands to Brahmin donees under the auspices of Brahmadeya and devadāna charters, the Pāla kings not only secured the allegiance of a scholarly elite but also spurred the transformation of marginal lands into productive agrarian settlements through the bhūmi-chchhidra provision; these donations—embellished with intricate seals, precise boundary descriptions, recipient genealogies, and astrological timing—functioned as both acts of piety and tangible assertions of cosmic kingship, effectively outsourcing taxation, legal jurisdiction, and resource control to a burgeoning class of landed intermediaries; in contrast to the smaller-scale, duty-oriented grants of the Gupta period, Pāla charters reveal an era in which temple complexes, Brahmin *agrahāras*, and regional camps became focal points of economic growth, social stratification, and ritual legitimacy, demonstrating how land was converted into political capital to reconfigure governance, reshape local hierarchies, and embed Sanskritic culture at the heart of North Bengal's early medieval landscape.

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‘Prasidha mama Bhāskara’-The Tradition of Worshipping Sūrya and His Iconographic Evolution and Variation Through Literature and Art

Snigdha Saha

Introduction

In ancient times, the sun stood as one of the nature’s most awe-inspiring phenomena, inspiring approbation and great respect among people across the world. Bhāskara or Sūrya, the Sun god, being an intrinsic part of Indian subcontinent’s cultural traditions, its manifestation in the field of art and religion, progressing gradually across the regions of Indian subcontinent. Nature worship played an integral role in life of pre-historic people, where sun attaining an supreme position, among the other natural deities. The Indus Valley dwellers of the proto-historic times might also have done so, though we have no definite means of knowing this from the remains they left us. In the initial stage the sun-god was worshipped in his natural atmospheric form as is clear from all available sources. Various potteries, seals, sealings etc of the time represented him symbolically. Vedic India too had a vigorous tradition of Sun-Worship which forms an integral part, practised by Indo-Āryans. In Ṛg Veda we find the aniconic representation of Sun god. It is in this period that humanization or anthropomorphisation of Sun god found its conception. The Mahābhārata and Rāmayaṅa give us information about the complete anthropomorphisation of the sun, but contain no evidence for his iconic traditions. The humanization of the god pressurised the man to materialise his ideas of providing a form to the formless. As a result, the iconic tradition started and sun was given shape in stone. Before the evolution of the real cult of icons of Sun, we find symbols of sun or disc, on silver punch- marked coins and human representation of the Sun on the potteries and Terracotta. Some of the coins of dynasty such as Indo- Greeks, and Kuśaṇas containing human figures identified either with sun-god or his devotee.Before Sūrya emerged as an independent and anthropomorphic deity in Indian art and religious practice, he was venerated as a vital component of the Navagraha pantheon. Among these nine celestial influencers, Surya held a distinguished position—not merely as a planetary force, but as the very source of light, life, and cosmic rhythm. His presence symbolized the movement of time, the regulation of seasons, and the sustaining energy of the universe. While the other grahas were often feared or appeased for astrological balance, Surya was equally revered for his benevolence, vitality, and radiance. This dual nature of cosmic power and divine grace laid the foundation for his eventual elevation into a fully independent deity with rich iconographic representation across regions.

Iconology

According to Bhaviṣya Purāṇa, Sūrya image was imported from Śākadvīpa identified as Seistan in Iran to Indian subcontinent. Its claim is brought into effect in connection we are told that,when Samba the son of Kṛṣṇa, was given a boon by Sun-god who cured him of leprosy, Sāmba then went to river Chandrabhāgā for a bath while he bathed, he came across a Sun-image, carried to him by waves after lifting it from stream and installed it ultimately in Mitravana, came to be known as earliest solar shrine. When Sāmba asked the image about its origin the image claimed that previously its splendour was so great it wasn’t possible for other creatures to tolerate it, therefore he ordered Viśvakarman to peel some portion of his body on a lathe and give a present shape. According to,Vishnu Purāṇa Sanjñā, unable to endure Sūrya's brilliance, leaves her shadow Chāyā in her place and departs.Upon discovering this, Sūrya's approaches

Viśvakarman, Sanjñā's father, requesting a reduction in his radiance. Viśvakarma then diminishes Sūrya's effulgence, making him more tolerable.

According to,Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Sūrya's instense heat hampers creation,prompting Lord Brahmā to intervene. Lord Brahmā instructs Viśvakarma to reduce Sūrya's radiance. Viśvakarma complies,refining Sūrya's brilliance to facilitate the continuation of creation.The Magian sun-priest from Iran began to settledown in different parts of northern India.The poem of 100 verses Sūryaśataka composed by Mayūra in honour of Sūrya from his recovery from leprosy also proves the high esteem and veneration in which God was held in the early post-Gupta period. The Smṛiti text Ānandagiri's Śankarvijayakāvya where sun god is being identified with a triad, further which can refer to three kinds such as with creation, preservation, destruction, and of three guṇas – satva, rajas, tāmas, and Sūrya is also one with the three-Braṃha, Viṣṅu, Śiva. Ptolemy in his book Geography, states that there might be Māga Brāṃhanas in India, and they lived in a town named Brachme.Xuang-Zang a Chinese pilgrim in his work Si-Yu-Ki, mentions and gives a description of the sun temple in Multan where we find a gold image of God studded with precious stones. Alberuni also mentions about this temple, where an image of the sun named 'Āditya' enshrined. Xuang-Zang, also refers to a splendid sun temple at Kannauj.The Arab Geographers like Alberuni, Abu-Isak al Istakhri and Al Idrisi who write about it, and the image enshrined there.

Iconography

According to Bṛhad Saṁhitā, states that sun god should be dressed like Northern's, starting from his chest till feet should be covered. He should be wearing a mukuṭa, hold two padmas by their stalks, wear Kuṇḍalas, long pearl necklace, viyaṅga,there should be a Prabha Maṇḍala, his face should be glowing. His nose, head, shanks, thighs, cheeks, breast should be elevated and prominent.

According to Viśvakarmaśilpa, the chariot of sun god refered to as Makara-dhvaja is one wheeled and is driven by seven horses.He holds lotus, wears an armour, he is wearing a Northern's dress or Udīcya Veṣa, he is adorned with jewellery, surrounded by a halo of light, has curly hair which is dressed. He is accompanied by two female figures Nikṣubhā and Rājinī are placed on his right and left respectively they are decked with ornaments and hair-dressing. Two male figures are placed in front of him Daṇḍa, one-faced and Skanda having a bright conch-shell. This text also gives the figure of varachāha on lotus,who is to represented as a shining horseman.

Tantrasāra, refers to the colour of God as golden leaf or a coral. He is said to be holding khatvaṅga, two lotuses, a wheel (cakra), a lance(śakti), a snare(paśa), hook (Sreni), a rosary(akṣamālā), skull (Kapāla). He has four changing faces; he wears a diadem made of made of jewels and he is shining with the necklace.

Śilpa Pancaratna, throws light on the image Sūrya, representing God with all the attributes of Vīṣṇu, according to the text Sūrya should be decorated with radiant head ress, bangles, armlets, earrings, avyaṅga, necklace descending down to the feet. He must carry a gada(mace), śaṅkha (conch shell), cakra (discuss), padma(lotus). He should wear garments made of silk, yellow in colour, should sit on a lotus.

Sāmba Purāṇa, here the iconology behind constructing a sūrya image is mentioned. Here almost same iconographic description as of other text. Some added features are that the image is again flanked by two Aśvinikumāras should be shown on both of his sides. Daṇḍi and Piṅgala should be placed respectively on the left and right of the sun-god, Rājinī (Kārtikeya), Toṣa(Hara), two Kalṁaśa birds (Pretādhīpa, Garuḍa). Jāndakāra(citrgupta), Māthara(Yamraja), Prapnuyan(ocean), Kaśutaya (Aruṇi, Kubera,

Soma, and Vināyaka) are his other attendants. It also contains the plan of a temple dedicated to Sun God.

Phases of Development of Solar Iconography

The first phase in connection with solar iconography started in 2nd -1st century BCE and continued upto 2nd century CE:

We find four representations of sun images –One from Bodh Gaya, where we can see carved Sūrya relief where he is seen riding a chariot, his lower body is hidden inside the chariot driven by seven horses, flanked by two female archers Uṣā and Pratyuṣa.

Another one from Lala Bhagat Pillar image, here sun is seen riding his chariot accompanied by two attendants, one holding a parasol and other cauri, is seen. The chariot is preceded by three ladies representing Uṣā, Pratyuṣa and Chāyā. A number of dwarfish figures preceding the queens of Sūrya are the Vālakhilyāḥ who lead the chariot of Sūrya.

Another representation of Sūrya in Odisha has been carved in Anantagumpha, in the Khandagiri, Udayagiri hillock, Bhubaneswar, 1st century BCE, here Sūrya is depicted as a turbaned royal personage wearing heavy Kuṇḍalas, a necklace and bangles. The left hand of the figure is placed on the waist and the right hand on the chest. He is seated under an umbrella, with a female figure holding a flying whisk-on either side and driving a chariot drawn by four spirited horses. Above them are representation of moon surrounded by stars and the sun symbolizing the stellar world. Near the right end of the relief near the right wheel of the chariot, there is pot-bellied dwarf demonic figure holding a spouted water-pot in his left hand and a banner in his right hand.

Another relief from Bhāja caves, where we can see Sūrya riding a chariot with one wheel driven by four horses he is attended by two female attendants one holding a flying whisk and other a parasol. Along with them here were two escorts' riders on horse-back accompany him in additional to two females.The wheels of chariot is depicted as crushing a large, almost naked female demonic figure of darkness and night.

According to Cunningham, the images of this period were influenced by Hellenistic tradition, and this statement was invalidated by Banerjee claiming that this image shows conformity with vedic traditions and the presence of the Sun's attendants Uṣā and Pratyuṣa, pointing towards its Indian origin.

The 2nd phase century CE and continued upto 6th century CE, this period is marked by the introduction of Magian form of sun-cult, resulting in adoption of Greek, Iranian tradition in Solar Iconography. The Iranian features that were added were Ūdīcya veṣa or northern's dress, comprising of a short tunic, Avaṅga or waist-girdle, long boots, a halo behind the god's head or PrabhāMaṇḍala, scythean-head dress,his two attendants Piṅgala and Daṇḍi sometimes dressed in similar foreign attire reinforcing the courtly persian influence.

Some images of Sūrya seating in Utkāṭikāsana can be attributed to Kūṣāṇa period, where he is seen seating on chariot driven by horses, on head there is helmet held fast by a chaplet and band, ornamented, having two hands holding a dagger, or sometimes reins of horses, or a lotus bud.There are remnants of the halo at either side of the back, moustaches and fire-altar in front face of pedestal.

The Gupta period marked a significant phase of Indianisation in sculptural representation such as invariable holding of lotuses by their stalks in both hands by sun images and addition of female attendants and his wives such as Uṣā, Pratyuṣā, Chāyā, Rājanī, Nikṣubhā, Maheśvetā proves occupation of Indian elements in them, which was subsequently enriched through the assimilation of Iranian elements, resulting in a unique iconographic synthesis.

We find both seated and standing sun images of Gupta Period, such as image from Garhwa Allahabad, Sūrya sitting on his chariot holding lotuses in his two hands, driven by horses and flanked by two female archers to dispel darkness. Whereas, we also see standing a Sūrya with four hands two of his lower hands are broken from where his Uttarīya is hanging like a garland, his upper hands holding two blossomed lotus flowers, he is wearing kiriṭamukuṭa, he is decked with ornaments, kaṭibandha, halo encircling his head, flanked by two female attendants, a small female figure in front of his legs and numerous small sculptures. Here, another standing image of Sūrya is seen holding lotuses in his two hands, wearing a long tunic and boots, scythean-head dress, flanked by two male attendants Piṅgala and Daṇḍi on his right and left respectively with former holding a pen and an inkpot and other a staff.

North Indian Sculptures

Among the major Sūrya temples in India, the most prominent are the Mārtaṇḍ Sun Temple in the North, Konark Sun Temple in the East, Modhera Sun Temple in the West,each reflecting distinct regional styles and devotional practices. Here from Northern India, we find image of Sūrya in trefoil niches of the Mārtaṇḍ Sun temple, here Sūrya is seen riding on a horse, holding lotuses in both of his hands, and flanked by his male attendants Piṅgala and Daṇḍi on his right and left respectively. Another brass image of Sūrya, from Kashmir Region, where he is seen standing holding bunch of lotus flowers in both his hands, wearing a northern's dress and long boots, scythean-headdress.

South Indian Sculptures:-

According to Suprabhedāgama and Aṁśumadbhedāgama,In Southern India, the inconography of sun images is different from that of Northern Indian.Here, they are free from East-Iranian features,any westerns garments or coat of mails, boots, Aruṇa his chariotter,and his horses, halo and accessories.The halo here is being replaced by a circle and in place of coat there is Udarābandha. According to Rao, "The South Indian figures of Sūrya, have as a rule, their hands lifted up as high as the shoulders, and are made to hold lotus flowers which are only half blossomed; the images have invariably Udarābandha, and their legs and feet are always left bare.

In the sun images found in South India such as from Andhra Pradesh 12th century CE figure, we can see Sūrya standing holding half-blossomed lotuses, not wearing boots, wearing a Udarābandha, upavīta, a KirīṭaMukuṭa and kuṇḍalas, ornamented, and flanked by two women Uṣa and Pratyuṣa holding bows. Another standing sun image from Cennākeśava Temple, Belur where we find Sūrya standing and he is four armed with two frontal hands holding half blossomed lotuses and two Pārśva Hasta comprising of cakra and śaṅkha. He is drawn by seven horses and a chariotter.

Eastern Indian Sculpture

In Eastern India, The Sūrya image with its composite elements of attendants, charioteer, horses etc represents not very distant approach to the full-fledged stela composition of Pāla Art. The elaborate standing Sūrya figure of Bengal and Bihar of the Pāla and Sena times show overcrowding with accessory figures and details. The stella features an arch behind the god's head and a kiriṭamukha at the top of the arch, two vidyādharas flying, here Sūrya is seen wearing cloth descending down to the knee and a second piece of cloth is flatly hung in his front. The girdle is profusely ornamented, he is decked with ornaments, wears Kunḍalas, he holds two lotuses in his hands,he is accompanied by various women and men such as Piṅgala and Daṅḍa, two wives Saraṇyū and Nikṣubha standing on left and right side of the god, Uṣa is placed in the front of sun-god.The god sits inside the car of one wheel while seven spirited horses are represented

underneath. Aruṇa his charioteer is seen driving and below it there is probably a Nāga depicted sometimes.

A Sun image from Ajagaibinathhill on Sultanganj Bihar, seven horses seen represented in the pedestal. The upper part of panel consisting of eight figures seven standing and one sitting on the pedestal. The central figure here is that of Sūrya standing he is crowned and well dressed. Two of his hands holding bloomed lotuses over the shoulders. A sword is seen just below the left elbow. His feet are'nt visible, two male figures flanking Sūrya, kunḍi and Danḍi, where Kunḍi holds a pen and ink pot and Danḍi holding a staff. A little lower but parallel height he is flanked by two female figure Rājni and Niṣprabhā holding cauris. Below them are two female archers seen with bows drawn at the two corners of the pedestal.

Another image from Kashipur, Pāla period, 10th Century CE, here we can see a standing figure of Sūrya riding on his one wheeled chariot drawn by his chariotter Aruṇa who with his left hand holding the reins of the seven horses and a whip in his right hand. Below the chariot there is probably a Nāga symbolizing Sūrya's dominance over three realms.

Various figures of Sūrya whether seated, standing, or riding on a horse can be seen from Konark temple sculptures of Odisha. A Sūrya standing figure from Konark Temple, Odisha,13th Century CE, British Museum, decked with ornaments and cloths wearing a heavy waist girdle or Avyaṅga, upavīta, flanked by his two male figures and driven by his chariotter and seven horses. Sūrya image is carved on a stela, whereas the stela is densely adorned with multiple figures of men and women with two Vidyādharas flying at top and a kiriṭa mukha at the top of arch of the stela.

Another image from Thākuri dynasty Nepal 9th century CE, showing a seated image of Sūrya on a double petalled lotus seat, sitting in padmāsana. He is wearing a crown and a dress holding two lotuses in his hands.

Western Indian Sculpture:-

In Western India, among the major Sūrya temples in India, here in Modhera we find numerous images of Sūrya intricately carved throughout the temple complex, reflecting the regional artistic excellence of Western India. A figure of standing Sūrya on the niches and walls of sun temple, Modhera, Gujarat,11th century CE, here Sūrya stands in Samabhaṅga pose, standing in a chariot drawn by seven horses, it had four hands out of which two lower hands are broken and two upper hands holding full blown conventional lotus. It is adorned with a Kiriṭamukuṭa, kuṇḍalas,hārās and armour covering his chest,and an uttarīyavastra in the shape of long garland,avyaṅga and high-boots. He is flanked by two attendants on both the sides, Piṅgala and Daṇḍa behind each of these attendants are Aśvinis-the horse faced gods. Western India was not far behind in this respect though stylistically different from that of eastern India. Another Sun-relief of the 8th century CE, has been found from Ellora, here Sūrya is standing on a chariot driven by seven-horses and a charioteer Aruṅa. He is not wearing any westerner's dress.He is flanked by two female archers, Uṣā and Pratyuṣā. Another image from Ajagaon, Sindhudurg, district of Maharasthra here, a figure of Sūrya standing, lower portion of the sculpture are missing, he is well decked with ornaments, holding two lotus buds, and wearing a Kiriṭamukuṭa.

An image from niche of Neelkanth Temple wall, Alwar District, Rajasthan, where Sūrya is seating in Padma aśana and he is having eight set of hands of which right set of hands are broken and left set of hands holding full blown lotus, a staff, cakra, and a Komāṇḍulu, seating om a chariot driven by seven horses.

Syncretic Image

Syncretism in cultural and religious sense, refers to the amalgamation of philosophies of two or more different cults. It is believed to might happen when two major cults of Braṃhaṇism are brought together and given a shape towards diverse artistic traditions, to promote coherence among them. The worship of syncretistic deities had been prevalent in India.

Here, the cult of Sūrya can be seen merging with Cult of Śaivism, and with other cults as well. From Ekāmra- Purāṇa we get know that Śiva is often identified with Ṣurya while dedicating the prayer to the Bhāskareśvara Śiva of Bhubaneswar. Citing another source, from Ādityahṛdaya we can see that there is no difference between Āditya and śiva.

A sculpture from Konark museum, Odisha displayed is a chlorite image of Hara-Sūrya, here the image is seen standing in Samapada position on tri-ratha chariot drawn by seven horses and driven by a small figure displayed in front, Aruṇa. Here the god is seen having four hands, with two upper hands which are broken were holding lotuses clearly seen from the two lotuses beside his head, and his two lower arms holding a trident and other displaying varadā mudra. He is seen wearing waist girdle, ornaments, high crown, flanked by two attendants holding sword and shield. At the back of the image there is a tre-foil arch, where we can see various small and elaborate sculptures of four female holding garlands and Cāmaras. At the extreme top of the arch there is a kiriṭa mukha, flanked by two gandharvas bearing conch shells. We can also see two Vidyādharas flying in the top corner of the slab.

In the lowest tier of 13th century CE Jagamohaṇa of Konark Sun Temple, we find two sculptures of Mārtaṇḍ Bhairava sculpted at the corners of Jagamohaṇa. Mārtaṇḍ Bhairava is a syncretic manifestation of Sūrya and Śiva.The figure having three heads, with long canines, flame fashioned hair, the figure is six armed, wearing a serpent upavīta, and a muṇda mālā, hanging to mid-thigh. He is seen holding triśula, śula, khaṭvaṅga, kapāla cakra, ḍamaru, showing dancing in lalita pose.

Sūrya and Viṣṇu both had pertinence since Vedic period. Sun god holds an important position in the life of Early Vedic people, soon its important position was superseded by the Viṣṇu in later vedic period. Their relationship is testified by various Purāṇas and Vedas. According to Ṛg Veda and Aruṇābha another commentator of Vedic literature mentions that three steps of Viṣṇu which symbolizes-the three different positions of Sūrya or sun at its – rising(sunrise), culminating (midday), setting (sunset) that Various Purāṇas such as Matsya Purāṇa, Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇas, Padṃa Purāṇas, Bhaviṣya Purāṇas states that there is no difference between Sūrya and Viṣṇu. In "Viṣṇu Sahasranāma" we find 108 names of Viṣṇu where, Sūrya is one of them. Viṣṇu Purāṇas mentioned that Viṣṇu lives in Śākā dvīpa in the form of Sūrya and according to Samba Purāṇas Sūrya was worshipped as of Viṣṇu in Śveta dvīpa. Brahṃa Purāṇa states dwelve aspects of Sūrya including Viṣṇu.

There are two types of Sūrya-Nārayaṇa images:

1. One type Sūrya-Nārayaṇa, having the combination of characteristics and peculiarities of two divinities within a single form.
2. Other type being, bifacial Sūrya-Nārayaṇa representing Sūrya on the one side of slab and Nārayaṇa on the reverse.

The example of former being, Hinglajgarh at Birla, Bhopal. A stone image of Sūrya, four-armed holding full bloomed lotuses in two upper hands and holding a staff and conch shell on the other set of hands. Sitting on a chariot of seven horses driven by charioteer Aruṇa are depicted below the feet of God and seen flanked by two female

figures. Such types of images were also found at Modhera Temple, Gujarat, Jhalwar Museum.

A stone image Sūrya-Nārayana from Belur assignable to Hoysala Period preserved in Madras Museum.

The later sculpture from Bihar, National Museum, New Delhi, 11th-12th CE. In this Basaltic image of, Sūrya is on the obverse side of the slab in Udīcya veśa consisting of a kavaca, he is having a broad powerful torso, two handed holding full bloomed lotuses, the twisted hair locks covering the ears falling beneath the crown, he is decked with ornaments, wearing kiriṭamukuṭa, necklace and armlets. At his back there is a broken circular nimbus with a flower petal printed.The lower body of Sūrya hidden in the chariot driven by seven galloping horses. Charioteer Aruṇa seated in triratha pedestal in front holding the whip. Flanked by Pin ḍgala holding pen and inkpot in his hands on the right and Daṇḍa holding a staff on the left while his right hand as abhaya mudra. Uṣā and Pratyuṣā at the extreme left and right flanked Sūrya holding bow and arrows. On the reverse side, Showing Viṣṇu standing in Samapada position, on double petalled lotus on a triratha pedestal. He is decked with ornaments, such as kunḍala, beaded yajñopavīta, kiriṭa mukuṭa, avyaṅga, anklets, armlets, vanamālā falling on his knees. He is wearing a diaphanous dhoti having curled wavy lines. He is four-armed holding śaṇkha, cakra, while lower left hand is broken. He has prabhāvati in floral pattern incised on the back slab he is accompanied by a female figure holding cauri and padma identified as gadādevi on his right, a male on his left, holding padma and cakra identified as cakrapuruṣa both are standing in tribhaṅga pose. On the right side of the pedestal shows a kneeling figure. Other varieties of this type of image have been noticed at Chandimau and Maghra datable to post-Gupta and Pāla period.

Another Syncretic image of Brahṁā, Sūrya, Viṣṇu and Śiva from shrine at Lamboji Mata Temple at Delmal, North Gujarat, showing a curious image occurs on the west face of the little shrine in south east corner of the courtyard of the temple. Here we can see the blending of three divinities the figure having eight arms with upper set of hands holding trident and serpent denoting sīva, his next set of hands holding full blown lotuses depicting sūrya, and lower set of hand holding komaṇḍulu and other hand showing abhaya mudra depicting Bramha. This figure has four heads but due to bass relief we are not able to spot the fourth one. The figure is seated on Garuḍa .The rest pair of arms are broken denoting they might have been holding conch and cakra attributes of lord Viṣṇu. Below there is pedestal where we can see the vehicles or vāhaṇas of the gods, horse denoting Sūrya, goose depicting Braṃhā.

Photos

Image of Sūrya, Early Gupta Period and Image of Sūrya, Tukkachchi, Tamil Nadu.

Standing Sūrya, Bangladesh, Philadelphia Museum 12th Century CE And on the niches and walls of Sun Temple, Modhera, Gujarat,11th Century CE.

Syncretic Image of Brahmā, Sūrya, and Śiva, Viṣṇu from shrine at Lamboji Mata at Delmal, North Gujarat, 12th Century CE.

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प्राचीन भारतीय कला - साहित्य मे प्रकृति : एक अध्ययन

के. एम. सरस्वती

प्रस्तावना

प्रकृति सौन्दर्य का ही विषय नहीं अपितु आध्यात्म का भी आधार है। प्राचीन कालीन भारतीय मनीषियों ने पर्यावरण संरक्षण के संदर्भ मे विशेष महत्त्व दिया है। इस चेतना का उदहारण है, प्रकृति और पुरुष की कल्पना। इस तरह अनेकों ऐसे उदाहरण हमारे भारतीय स्त्रोत मे उपलब्ध हैं जो पर्यावरण के प्रति जागरुकता को उजागर करते हैं। शायद उन्हे इस वर्तमान समस्या का आभास था यही कारण था कि धर्म के शास्त्रगत विधान के निर्माण मे पर्यावरण को उच्च स्थान दिया गया है। जब भी हम पूजन की प्रक्रिया या कोई सांसारिक संस्कार, उत्सव प्रारम्भ करते हैं तो उसका प्रारम्भ प्रकृति पूजा से होता है।

शोध उद्देश्य

1- प्राचीन भारतीय कला एवम् साहित्य के द्वारा प्रकृति के महत्त्व को प्रतिपादित करना।
2- प्रकृति और मनुष्य के बीच संबंध स्थापित करना और इसकी आवश्यकता को पहचानना।
3- वर्तमान जीवन मे पर्यावरण समस्या को उजागर करना।
4- प्राचीन तथ्यों के आधार पर वर्तमान पर्यावरण चेतना को बढ़ावा देना।

शोध विधि

इसके अन्तर्गत द्वितीयक शोध सामग्री के अंतर्गत विभिन्न लेखकों के ग्रंथों एवं मूल ग्रंथों का अनुवाद सम्मिलित है। साथ ही उत्तर भारतीय मंदिरों (भुवनेश्वर, कोणार्क, पुरी, खजुराहो, मोढ़ेरा, पालीताणा के मन्दिर के विभिन्न प्राकृतिक कलात्मक अंकन) के क्षेत्र भ्रमण के आधार पर कुछ तथ्यों को प्रस्तुत किया गया है।

साहित्य समीक्षा

भारतीय कला (2007) मे वासुदेव शरण अग्रवाल ने प्रागैतिहासिक कला के अन्तर्गत प्रकृति और मनुष्य के सम्बन्ध को अप्रत्यक्ष रुप से दिखाया है, इसीप्रकार स्तूप कला,मथुरा कला एवं विभिन्न काल के मूर्ति अलंकरण मे प्राकृतिक आयामों का उल्लेख किया है।

प्राचीन भारतीय मनोरंजन (2013) की विषय वस्तु मे मन्मथ राय ने प्राचीन काल मे मनोरंजन के रुप मे आखेट, पशु - पक्षी युद्ध, उद्यान यात्रा आदि का वर्णन किया है। प्रस्तुत रचना प्रकृति और मनुष्य के बीच एक घनिष्ठ संबंध को रुपायित करती है।

वैष्णव धर्म (1977) आचार्य परशुराम चतुर्वेदी की धर्म सम्बन्धित रचना है। इसमे धर्म के सन्दर्भ मे यदा-कदा प्रकृति का वर्णन किया गया है ।

मूल ग्रन्थ वेद, जातक, शिल्पप्रकाश, मानसार, संगीतोपनिषद्धार आदि विभिन्न विषयों से संबंधित हैं लेकिन प्रकृति इन रचनाओं मे स्पष्ट है।

प्रकृति भारतीय आध्यात्म एवं सौंदर्यशास्त्र की आधारशिला है। जब हम प्रकृति के विषय मे सूक्ष्म अध्ययन करते हैं तो स्पष्ट होता है कि प्रकृति केवल सौंदर्य का विषय नहीं अपितु यह भारतीय आध्यात्म की आधारशिला है। इस चेतना का उदाहरण लोक जीवन से भी लिया जा सकता है। मनुष्य के जीवन से संबंधित विभिन्न आयामों के विकास का संबंध ही प्रकृति से है। प्राचीन काल से वर्तमान तक हमारी विभिन्न परम्पराओं,

रीति - रिवाजों, त्यौहार, व्रत, व्यवहार आदि विभिन्न सांस्कृतिक परम्पराओं ने प्रकृति से कई आवश्यक तथ्यों को ग्रहण किया।

यदि हम वेदों का अध्ययन करें तो स्पष्ट है कि सभी देवों का मूल स्वरुप प्राकृतिक है प्रार्थना के समय जिनका मानवीकरण उनके गुण के आधार पर किया गया है। यह शिक्षा भी वैदिक विद्वानों ने लोक जीवन मे प्रकृति के महत्त्व को देखते हुए ग्रहण की होगी। भारतीय लोक संस्कृति मे हमे प्राचीन काल से वृक्ष पूजा का उद्धरण मिलता है, इसके लिए प्राकृत साहित्य मे **रुक्ख मह** शब्द का प्रयोग है। सभी धर्मों ने वृक्ष पूजा परम्परा को उन्मुक्त हो अपने धर्म मे स्थान दिया। ऋग्वेद के 9वें मण्डल मे सहस्त्र शाखाओं वाले वनस्पति का वर्णन मिलता है,जो वृक्ष की प्रशंसा मे है।1 इसी प्रकार बौद्ध धर्म मे भी विभिन्न ग्रंथों से प्रकृति के सुंदरतम स्वरुप का दर्शन होता है। यह संदर्भ किसी न किसी प्रकार से मनुष्य को शिक्षा देने के लिए प्रयुक्त हैं। उदाहरण - **अंगुत्तर निकाय** 2 मे अत्यन्त सुन्दर रुप मे वृक्ष के कर्तव्य एवं उसके महत्त्व को प्रतिपादित किया गया है - **"भूत पुब्बम, ब्राह्मण धम्मिक, रञ्ञो कोरव्यस्स सुप्पतिट्ठो नाम निग्रोध राजा अहोसी पंचशाखो सीतच्छाचो मनोरमो।"**

गुप्तकालीन प्राप्त जैन तीर्थंकर की मूर्तियों मे सजावट क्रम के अन्तर्गत बोधिवृक्ष को भी उकेरा गया है। यह सभी उद्धरण प्राचीन भारतीय संस्कृति मे व्याप्त वृक्ष पूजा के स्वरुप एवं उसकी आवश्यकता को स्पष्ट करते हैं।3 वेदों मे प्रकृति के रौद्र रुप का भी वर्णन मिलता है। इस सन्दर्भ मे वेदों मे उल्लिखित मरुतगण का उल्लेख किया जा सकता है, जो आंधी -तूफान के देवता माने गए हैं। उनके प्रकोप से पृथ्वी धूल से भर जाती है, वृक्ष की शाखाएं टूट जाती हैं, पृथ्वी कांपने लगती है आदि।4 प्राचीन उपदेशात्मक ग्रन्थों मे भी प्रकृति के विभिन्न स्वरूपों के माध्यम से मनुष्य को नैतिक शिक्षा दी गई है। ब्रह्मदत्त जातक, जवसकुण जातक, द्ददभ जातक, ककाती जातक इत्यादि बुद्ध के पूर्व जन्म मे विभिन्न पशु - पक्षी आदि के रुप मे जन्म लेते हुए लोक कल्याण का भाव लेकर कार्य करने की कथा है।5 भगवान श्री कृष्ण ने गीता मे भौतिक जगत मे व्याप्त बंधनों की तुलना वृक्ष से की गई है।6

इन विभिन्न साहित्यिक ग्रन्थों के अध्ययन से स्पष्ट होता है कि मनुष्य प्रकृति से किस प्रकार संबंधित है। उसके बिना वह जीवन की कल्पना नहीं कर सकता। सामाजिक, धार्मिक, आर्थिक सम्पूर्ण पक्ष को प्रकृति ने किसी न किसी रुप मे प्रभावित किया है। प्रकृति के महत्त्व को प्रतिपादित करने के लिए ही मनीषियों ने तिर्थाटन, दान, व्रत इत्यादि को प्रकृति से जोड़ने का प्रयास किया।काशी,प्रयाग जैसे तिर्थों मे स्नान का उद्देश्य धार्मिक के साथ मनोवैज्ञानिक भी था, ताकि मनुष्य जल के महत्व को समझे, संरक्षण करें और उसे दूषित न करे। काशी मे वर्तमान मे वरुणा घाट, मणिकर्णिका घाट, अस्सी घाट आदि किसी न किसी प्रकार के महात्म्य से जुड़े हैं।7 मनुष्य पाप - पुण्य से प्रभावित होकर अधिकांश कर्म करता है। अतः यह सम्भव है कि जल संरक्षण के लिए इन मनोवैज्ञानिक धारणाओं को धार्मिक रुप दिया गया। वर्तमान मे कुम्भ स्नान, माघ, कार्तिक स्नान जैसी गतिविधियां तिर्थाटन से संबंधित हैं लेकिन इस सन्दर्भ मे पर्यावरण चेतना का अभाव है अर्थात् यह प्रकृति की सुरक्षा के प्रति मानव उदासिनता है। यही कारण है कि वर्तमान मे नदियां नालों के रुप मे परिवर्तित हो रही हैं अथवा सूख रही हैं । मौर्य काल मे प्रकृति के संरक्षण के लिए शासन की क्रियाशीलता अशोक के लेखों मे मिलती है। अशोक के प्रथम शिलालेख (गिरनार संस्करण) मे- 'कोई जीव न मारने का निर्देश है। इसमे उल्लेख है कि प्रतिदिन लाखों जीव मारे जाते थें लेकिन अब दो मोर, एक हिरण मारे जायेंगे और भविष्य मे इनके मारे जाने पर भी रोक लगा दिया जायेगा।'8 यह उल्लेख तत्कालीन पर्यावरण चेतना, जीव संरक्षण की जागरूकता, प्रकृति के संरक्षण से मानव जीवन के विकास को रेखांकित करता है। इन उल्लेखों से वर्तमान पीढ़ी बहुत कुछ सीखा सकती है।हमारे पूर्वजों को वर्तमान समस्या का आभास था यही कारण है कि उनके द्वारा प्रकृति को विशेष महत्व दिया गया जिसे आधुनिकता मे हम पीछे छोड़ चुके हैं।

इन साहित्यिक एवं अभिलेखिक साक्ष्यों के अतिरिक्त मानव की लोक परम्पराऐं स्वयं उसे प्रकृति के समीप ले जाती हैं। विवाह से लेकर अन्त्येष्टि संस्कार तक प्रकृति के विभिन्न आयामों से सानिध्य प्राप्त करता हुआ मनुष्य भौतिक एवं आध्यात्मिक जीवन को समझता है और उसे अपनी समझ के अनुसार जीने का प्रयास करता है। विवाह के समय कोहबर लोक जीवन और प्रकृति का अनूठा संगम है। यदि हम विचार करें कि इसकी आवश्यकता क्यों पड़ी तो स्पष्ट है कि कहीं न कहीं यह मनुष्य मे प्राकृतिक चेतना, संरक्षण, महत्व को रेखांकित करने के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है।

विभिन्न देवी

देवताओं के प्रतिमा निर्माण मे प्राकृतिक तत्वों को सम्मिलित किया गया। यहां तक कि उनके वाहन एवं आयुध को भी प्रकृति से लिया गया। अपराजितपृच्छा जैसे ग्रंथों मे दुर्गा के प्रतिमा निर्माण के सन्दर्भ मे इसका अध्ययन किया जा सकता है।9 रामचन्द्रमहापात्रकौलभट्टाचार्य ने अपने ग्रंथ '**शिल्प प्रकाश**'10 मे तोरण लक्ष्मी यंत्र निर्माण का निर्देश दिया है। इनका निर्माण तोरण के मध्य मे गज लक्ष्मी और शुभ लक्ष्मी के रुप मे करने का नियम है। यहां उनका वाहन, प्रकृति के धर्म एवं अलंकरण मे समाहित होने का सूचक है, अर्थात् कलाकार के लिए देव मूर्तियों के निर्माण के साथ -साथ प्रकृति संरक्षण की भावना भी समाज के प्रति महत्वपूर्ण कर्म था। कहीं न कहीं भविष्य को बचाये रखने के लिए, और प्रकृति एवं मानव जीवन के बीच संतुलन बनाए रखने के लिए पूर्वजों द्वारा पर्यावरण/प्रकृति चेतना को प्रसारित करने की आवश्यकता हुई।

मूर्ति कला के अतिरिक्त वास्तुकला अलंकरण मे कई प्राकृतिक आयामों को अपनाया गया। इस सन्दर्भ मे महत्वपूर्ण है लता स्तम्भ का निर्माण। जिसके लिए निर्देश है कि लता को सावधानी पूर्वक उकेरा जाना चाहिए।11 उसका वास्तविक स्वरुप प्रदर्शित हो संभवतः इस लिए यह नियम दिया गया होगा। वर्तमान मे सुरक्षित उड़ीसा, खजुराहो, गुजरात आदि के मन्दिर प्रकृति के महत्त्व को दिखाते हुए वर्तमान मे भी सुशोभित हैं। इस प्रकार का अप्रत्यक्ष रुप से महत्त्व प्रतिपादित करते हुए 'मानसार'12 मे कुओं, तालाबों, झील के चारो ओर सोपान निर्माण का उल्लेख है। इस प्रकार के निर्माण का प्रयोजन सम्भवतः सामान्य जीवों आदि को पानी की उपलब्धता आसान करना था। प्रकृति न केवल धर्म एवं आध्यात्मिक जीवन का मार्ग प्रशस्त करती है बल्कि यह मनोरंजन का अनूठा उदाहरण है। प्राचीन काल मे जब मानव आधुनिक साधनों के प्रयोग से अनिभिज्ञ था तब प्रकृति ही उसके मनोरंजन और मानसिक संतुलन का आधार थी, जैसे - उद्यान यात्रा, शुक क्रीड़ा, पशुओं का युद्ध आदि।13 वर्तमान मनुष्य अत्यंत आधुनिक साधनों से परिपूर्ण है, उसके पश्चात् भी प्रकृति से वह स्वयं को अलग नहीं कर सकता है। किसी भी सुन्दर यात्रा मे वह प्रकृति को विशेष रुप से सम्मिलित करता है। इन यात्रा पर किया गया खर्च सरकार और वहां रहने वाले लोगों के आय मे वृद्धि करता है। इस प्रकार प्रकृति धर्म, आध्यात्म, समाज, राष्ट्र, व्यक्ति की उन्नति मे सहायक है।

निष्कर्ष

उपरोक्त अध्ययन से स्पष्ट है कि प्रकृति का मनुष्य के जीवन मे व्यापक महत्व है।अर्थात् जीवन का प्रत्येक पक्ष इससे अछूता नहीं रह सकता और इसके अभाव मे जीवन की कल्पना भी नहीं की जा सकती। अतः यही कारण था कि वैदिक प्रार्थनाओं मे प्रकृति के विभिन्न रुपों को सम्मिलित किया गया। वर्तमान को अपने भूत से सीखने की आवश्यकता है ताकि भविष्य को सुरक्षित किया जा सके।

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श्रौतकाम्येष्टिषु दक्षिणावैविध्यम्।

अकल्पिता सप्रे

प्रस्तावना

यागसम्पन्नतायां यज्ञकर्मणः अवसानकाले ऋत्विग्भ्यः श्रद्धया विधिपूर्वकं यद्दानं दीयते तदेव दक्षिणा इति शास्त्रेषु प्रसिद्धम्। एषा दक्षिणा न केवलं द्रव्यदानरूपा, अपि तु यज्ञस्य कर्मसम्पत्तेः एकं अत्यावश्यकं तत्त्वं मन्यते। यज्ञकर्मणि मन्त्रः द्रव्यं, देवता, ऋत्विक् तथा यजमानः एते परस्परं सम्बन्धिनः सन्ति; एतेषु कर्मफलस्य अविच्छिन्नसिद्ध्यर्थं ऋत्विग्भ्यः दक्षिणादानं विधानतः अनिवार्यम्।

निरुक्तकारेण "यत्किमपि न्यूनम् अपूर्णं वा तत् पूर्णं कारयति सा दक्षिणा"[1] इति उक्त्वा दक्षिणाया यज्ञसम्पूरकत्वं प्रतिपादितम्। ब्राह्मणग्रन्थेषु अपि "दक्षयति सा दक्षिणा" इति वचनात् अस्याः कर्मसमर्थकारित्वं सूचितम्। दक्ष् सामर्थ्ये इति धातोः निष्पन्ना दक्षिणा यज्ञस्य साधनशक्तिं वर्धयति, यजमानस्य च कर्मफलप्राप्तौ अनुकूलतां जनयति। श्रौतयागेषु "दक्षिणां विना न कोऽपि यजेत" इति सामान्यनियमः कल्पसूत्रपरम्परायां प्रतिपादितः दृश्यते। यतः दक्षिणावर्जितः यागः अपूर्णकर्म इति निगद्यते। एष एव नियमः श्रौतकाम्येष्टिषु अपि अपि तिष्ठति, यतो हि काम्यकर्मणां विशेषतः फलाभिसन्धिपूर्वकत्वात् तेषां विधिसम्पत्तिः अपेक्ष्यते।

हिरण्यसम्बन्धिनीषु इष्टिषु यथा हिरण्येष्टि, सुवर्णकामेष्टि इत्यादिषु हिरण्यरूपा दक्षिणा सहजा एव, तत्र द्रव्यस्य देवतासम्बन्धः तथा फलविशेषाभिलाषः उभयं विचार्य सुवर्णदानस्य विधानं क्रियते।[2] यासु काम्येष्टिषु दक्षिणा विशेषतया न निर्दिष्टा भवति, तासु अन्वाहार्यचरुणा सह वासोदक्षिणा इति सामान्यनियमः दृश्यते। अयं नियमः श्रौतसूत्रकारैः कर्मव्यवस्थापनार्थं स्वीकृतः।[3] तथापि अन्यासु काम्येष्टिषु यजमानस्य अभिप्रेतफलविशेषानुसारं बहुविधाः दक्षिणाः विहिताः यथा गोदक्षिणा, हिरण्यदक्षिणा, अश्वदक्षिणा, वस्त्रदक्षिणा, भूमिदक्षिणा इत्यादयः। एतेषां दक्षिणाविधानानां वैविध्यं, तेषां तात्त्विकं कर्ममीमांसात्मकं च महत्त्वं संक्षेपेण अत्र विविच्यते।

'सोमारौद्रं चरुं निर्वपेज्ज्योगामयावी'[4] विधानमिदं चिररोगपीडितस्य पुरुषस्य रोगनिवृत्त्यर्थं विहितां काम्येष्टिं निर्दिशति। ज्योगामयः इत्यनेन दीर्घकालपर्यन्तं शरीरविघातकारिणः व्याधेः बोधः क्रियते। एषा इष्टिः सोमरुद्रदेवतासम्बद्धा रोगस्य दैहिक-दैविक-भौतिककारणनिवृत्त्यर्थं कल्पिता मन्यते। अस्यामिष्टौ उच्चार्यमाणया याज्यया होता सोमदेवस्य रसस्वरूपात् तथा अग्निदेवस्य तापशक्तेः आश्रयणेन यजमानस्य शरीरात् रोगदोषं निष्क्रामयति इति ब्राह्मणपरम्परायां प्रतिपाद्यते। सोमः औषधीनां राजा, रसानां जीवनहेतुश्च उच्यते। 'सोमो वै रसानां पतिः'।[5] रुद्रः पुनः व्याधिनिवारकदेवता 'नमो रुद्राय विष्णवे मृडय'[6] इति मन्त्रे तस्य रोगनाशकत्वं व्यक्तम्। एतयोः देवतयोः अनुग्रहेण होता रोगरूपाम् आर्तिं यजमानात् अपसारयितुं समर्थः भवति। अतः तस्मै होत्रे अनड्वान् (वृषभः वा बलिवाहनरूपः पशुः) दक्षिणारूपेण दातव्यः इति विधानम्। अनड्वान् वाहकत्वात् रोगभारस्य प्रतीकः मन्यते; यथा स द्रव्याणि वहति तथा होता मन्त्रबलात् यज्ञकर्मणः फलसिद्धिं वहति। श्रौतमीमांसायां होता

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[1] निरुक्तम् ४.१९

[2] तैत्तिरीयब्राह्मणम् ३.७.५; कात्यायनश्रौतसूत्रम् ६.२.१०

[3] आपस्तम्बश्रौतसूत्रम् २०.४.१२; बौधायनश्रौतसूत्रम् १६.१२

[4] आपस्तम्बश्रौतसूत्रम् २२.११

[5] शतपथब्राह्मणम् ३.६.२

[6] तैत्तिरीयसंहिता ४.५.१

यज्ञवाहकः इति संज्ञां लभते, यतः स याज्यादिमन्त्रप्रयोगेण देवतासंप्रेषणकार्यं निर्वहति। तस्मात् अन्वाहार्यभोजनपूर्वकं होतृदेवताभिमुखेन अनड्वान्दानं यागस्य फलसम्पत्तिं बोधयति।[7]

मैत्रायणीसंहितायां तु एषैव इष्टिः हविर्भेदेन निर्दिश्यते 'सौमारौद्रीमामिक्षां निर्वपेदामयाविनं याजयेत्'।[8] अत्र आमीक्षा (दधिमिश्रितं पयः) प्रयोगो विहितः। आमयावी इति शब्देन स पुरुषः गृह्यते यो न पूर्णतया जीवति, न च म्रियते। व्याधिग्रस्तत्वेन जीवनमरणयोर्मध्ये स्थितः इव भवति। तस्मात् तस्य जीवनरसस्य पुनर्सञ्चारणार्थं सोमरुद्रयागः क्रियते। सोमः रसयुक्तत्वात्, तथा 'पयो वै पुरुषः'[9] इति वचनानुसारं पयः-प्रधानहविषा यजमानस्य रोगदोष-निष्क्रमणं क्रियते इति तात्त्विकं विवेचनम्। अनेन हविषः औषधस्वरूपत्वं, देवतासम्बन्धश्च स्पष्टो भवति। मैत्रायणी-काठकयोः परम्परयोः हविर्विधानस्य मूलतत्त्वं समानमेव, सोमरुद्रदेवताभ्यां रोगनिवारणम् इति दृश्यते।

दक्षिणाविधानमपि शाखयोः समानेन द्रव्येण 'अनड्वान्दानेन' आम्नातम्; परन्तु तस्य नियमविशेषः मैत्रायणीपरम्परायां सूक्ष्मतया निर्दिष्टः। तत्र सामिधेनीमन्त्रान् अनुवक्ष्यन् होता वस्त्रेण परिणह्यते एतत् रोगस्य निग्रहस्य प्रतीकं मन्यते। ततः पिनद्धाक्षः (नेत्रबन्धनयुक्तः) सन् अरण्यं नीयते; अरण्यगमनं रोगदोषस्य ग्रामात् निष्कासनरूपं प्रतीकात्मकं कर्म। अरण्ये समाप्ते सति पराणीयविदर्शनम् अर्थात् दिक्प्रदर्शनपूर्वकं विमोचनम् क्रियते। ततः तस्मै होत्रे अनड्वान्दक्षिणा प्रदीयते।

श्रुत्यनुसारं स होता तं पशुं तत्रैव हत्वा भक्षयेत्; यदि न भक्षयेत् तर्हि प्रमीयेत इति वचनमपि दृश्यते मैत्रायणीब्राह्मणव्याख्यानपरम्परायाम्। अत्र यजमानः प्रमीयेत उत होता इति विषये स्पष्टनिर्णयः न दृश्यते; केचित् मीमांसकाः होतुः अनादरदोषम् इति मन्यन्ते, अन्ये तु यजमानस्य काम्यकर्मफलहानिम् इति व्याचक्षते। एवं शाखाभेदे सत्यपि दक्षिणाद्रव्यं समानं, किन्तु तदनुष्ठाननियमेषु, प्रतीकात्मककियासु च वैविध्यं दृष्टिगोचरं भवति। एतत् श्रौतकाम्येष्टीनां द्रव्य-नियम-प्रतीकवैचित्र्यस्य उत्कृष्टं उदाहरणम् इति वक्तुं शक्यते।

पशुकामेष्टिः- पशुप्राप्त्यर्थं पशुकामः यजमानः एतया त्रिहविष्कया इष्ट्या यजेत इति श्रुतिविधानम्।[10] अत्र त्रयाणां हविषां प्रयोगः विधीयते। तद्यथा अग्नये दात्रे अष्टाकपालपुरोडाशं निर्वपेत्, इन्द्राय प्रदात्रे एकादशकपालपुरोडाशं निर्वपेत्, प्रजापतये तु दधि-मधु-घृत-आपः-धानाश्च समर्पयेत्। धानाः इति भर्जितधान्यविशेषस्य संज्ञा, यत् प्रजननवृद्धिसूचकं हविः मन्यते।

अस्मिन् कर्मणि अग्निदेवता प्रजननशक्तेः आदिकारणम् इति भावेन यजमानाय पशून् जनयति 'अग्निर्हि पशून् प्रजनयति' इति ब्राह्मणपरम्परायां विवक्षितम्।[11] इन्द्रः पुनः वृद्धिप्रदाता सन् विद्यमानानां पशूनां संवर्धनं करोति 'इन्द्रो वै वर्धयिता' इति मन्त्रोक्तार्थानुसारेण। पशवः सर्वे प्राजापत्याः 'पशवो वै प्रजापतेः'[12] इति श्रुतेः अतः प्रजापतिदेवतायाः हविः सृष्टितत्त्वस्य मूर्तिमन्तं प्रतीकं भवति। मधु अत्र विशेषतया आत्मतत्त्वस्य प्रतीकरूपेण निर्दिश्यते 'मधु वै पुरुषस्यात्मा' इति व्याख्यानपरम्परा प्रसिद्धा। अग्नौ मधुहोमेन यजमानः स्वात्मनः प्रजननशक्तिं देवतासम्बन्धेन जागरुकां करोति इति तात्त्विकः भावार्थः स्वीक्रियते। एषा कल्पना काम्यकर्मणां मनोदैहिकफलसम्बन्धं सूचयति।

अस्यां पशुकामेष्टौ दक्षिणाविधानं विशेषतः काठकसंहितायामेव निर्दिष्टम्। तत्र पोष्टोस्सिध्मां (?)[13] (पोषणसमर्थां, सुसंवृद्धां) गां दद्यात् इति विधानम्। यदि तादृशी गौः दातुं न शक्या, तर्हि पृष्ठौहीं प्रजननक्षमां धेनुं

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[7] कात्यायनश्रौतसूत्रम् ७.३.१८

[8] मैत्रायणीसंहिता २.३.५

[9] तैत्तिरीयब्राह्मणम् २.८.८

[10] काठकसंहिता २१.३; कात्यायनश्रौतसूत्र ९.६

[11] तैत्तिरीयब्राह्मणम् २.२.६

[12] शतपथब्राह्मणम् ६.१.२

[13] संशोधकोऽत्र संदिग्धः।

दक्षिणारूपेण प्रदद्यात्।[14] अनेन स्पष्टं भवति यत् यजमानस्य पशुकामना स्वयं दक्षिणाद्रव्ये प्रतिबिम्बिता। यः पशुवृद्धिम् इच्छति, स प्रजननशक्तियुक्तां धेनुं दत्वा कर्मफलस्य अनुकूलतां साधयति।

कारीरी- वृष्टिकामेष्टिः- वृष्टिकामानां यजमानानां कृते 'कारीरी' इति नाम्ना काम्येष्टिः निर्दिष्टा।[15] अस्यामिष्टौ दक्षिणारूपेण कृष्णं वासः, कृष्णोऽश्वः, कृष्णा अविः (कृष्णवर्णा मेषी वा) दातव्या इति विधानम्। न केवलं दक्षिणाद्रव्ये, अपि तु समग्रकर्मव्यवस्थायामेव कृष्णवर्णप्रधानता अवलोक्यते। कृष्णवर्णानि वस्त्राणि, कृष्णानि पात्राणि, कृष्णवर्णा व्रीहयः हविषां रूपेण प्रयुज्यन्ते। अयं वर्णवैशिष्ट्यसम्बन्धः केवलं बाह्याचारनियमः न, किन्तु कामनाया प्रतीकात्मकप्रकाशनमिति व्याचक्षते। कृष्णवर्णः मेघस्य, जलधारायाः, गर्भितवृष्टेः च द्योतकः मन्यते; अतः वर्षाकामनायां तादृशवर्णयुक्तद्रव्यप्रयोगः मनोवैज्ञानिक-दैविकसम्बन्धस्य उदाहरणम्। यज्ञमीमांसायां एतेषां चिह्नानां विज्ञानम् अर्थात् कामनापूर्त्यर्थं यानि प्रतीकद्रव्याणि नियोज्यन्ते तेषां तात्त्विकसम्बन्धबोधः विशेषेण चर्च्यते। एवं कारीरीवृष्टिकामेष्टौ सम्पूर्णकर्मणि एकरूपेण कृष्णवर्णस्य अन्वयः दृश्यते; एतत् काम्येष्टीनां द्रव्य-देवता-कामना-सम्बन्धस्य उत्कृष्टं दार्शनिकं तथा कर्ममीमांसात्मकं उदाहरणम् इति निर्णीयते।

रौद्रवास्त्वमयचरुषि दक्षिणावैविध्यस्य विवेचनम्- यस्य यजमानस्य प्रजाः अथवा पशवः रुद्रप्रकोपेन विनष्टाः, ज्वरादिरोगपीडिताः वा भवन्ति, स तादृशदोषनिवारणार्थं रौद्रं वास्त्वमयं चरुं निर्वपेत् इति श्रुतिविधानम्।[16] अत्र रौद्रः इति देवताविशेषनिर्देशः, वास्त्वमयः इति तु गृहक्षेत्रसम्बद्धदोषप्रशमनार्थकं कर्मसूचनम्। रुद्रः रोग-व्याधि-विनाशनकर्ता तथा पशुपालकदेवता इति वैदिकपरम्परायां प्रसिद्धः।'नमो रुद्राय पशुपतये'[17] इति मन्त्रेषु तस्य पशुरक्षणकर्तृत्वं प्रतिपाद्यते। एषा इष्टिः गृहवास्तुदोषसम्बद्धव्याधिनाशार्थं, पशुनाशपरिहारार्थं च काम्यकर्मरूपेण विहिता। यज्ञेन रुद्रस्य प्रसादनं कृत्वा यजमानः स्वगृहे, स्वपशुषु, स्वप्रजासु च आरोग्य-क्षेम-संवृद्धिं कामयते। अस्यां रौद्रवास्त्वमयेष्टौ दक्षिणाविधानं विशेषवैचित्र्ययुक्तं दृश्यते। मैत्रायणीसंहितायां 'कूटं वा, अकर्णः कर्णविकलो वा गर्दभः' इति दक्षिणाद्रव्यं निर्दिष्टम्।[18] अत्र कूट इति विकृताङ्गत्वेन दुःस्थितिप्रतीकः, अकर्णः अथवा कर्णविकल-गर्दभः इति दोषयुक्तपशुः। एते सर्वे रोग-दुःख-विघ्नानां प्रतीकरूपेण स्वीक्रियन्ते। रुद्रप्रकोपेन उत्पन्नदोषस्य प्रतीकात्मकत्याग एव अस्य दक्षिणादानस्य तात्त्विकः आशयः मन्यते।

आपस्तम्बश्रौतसूत्रे तु अस्याः दक्षिणायाः बहुविधरूपाणि निर्दिष्टानि। कृष्णाजिनम्, कूटः, अकर्णः गर्दभः, हरिणः, हरिणपृणाका (हरिणचर्मनिर्मितं पात्रविशेषः), श्यामाकपात्रम्, शफकः (किञ्चित् विकृतद्रव्यविशेषः) इत्यादयः।[19] एतेषां सर्वेषां साम्यं यत् ते विकृतस्वभावयुक्तानि वा अरण्यसम्बद्धानि वा भवन्ति। रुद्रस्य अरण्यदेवतारूपत्वात् तथा विकृतद्रव्यैः दोषपरिहारकल्पनया एतादृशदक्षिणाविधानं संगच्छते।

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[14] काठकसंहिता २१.३; कात्यायनश्रौतसूत्र ९.६.१२

[15] आपस्तम्बश्रौतसूत्रम् १९.१४; बौधायनश्रौतसूत्रम् १५.९

[16] मैत्रायणीसंहिता २.१.९; कात्यायनश्रौतसूत्रम् ७.५.६

[17] तैत्तिरीयसंहिता ४.५.१

[18] मैत्रायणीसंहिता २.१.९

[19] आपस्तम्बश्रौतसूत्रम् ९.१४.१४ रुद्रटीका।

सत्याषाढश्रौतसूत्रे अपि एतेषां दक्षिणाद्रव्याणां समन्वयः कृतः, तथा 'द्वे वाक्याम्बू, शूर्पे वा, शय्यां वा' इत्यपि दक्षिणारूपेण स्वीकृतम्।[20] वाक्याम्बू इति ओषधिविशेषः[21], शूर्पं धान्यशोधनाय उपकरणम्, शय्या तु विश्रान्तिसाधनम् एतानि सर्वाणि गृहजीवनसम्बद्धदोषपरिहारप्रतीकानि इति व्याख्या।

अत्र स्पष्टं दृश्यते यत् अस्यां रौद्रवास्त्वमयेष्टौ दक्षिणाया अत्यन्तं वैविध्यम् अस्ति। द्रव्याणां, पशूनामुपकरणानां च विकल्पैः कर्मविधानम्। यद्यपि मूलतया एषा इष्टिः मैत्रायणीपरम्परायामेव आम्नाता, तथापि शाखाभेदे सत्यपि आपस्तम्ब-, सत्याषाढ-कात्यायन-श्रौतसूत्रेषु अस्याः विधानं दृष्टिगोचरं भवति। अत एव श्रौतकाम्येष्टिषु दक्षिणावैविध्येन विशिष्टा एषा इष्टिः एकैव उदाहरणरूपेण विशेषतया उल्लेखनीया। एषा दक्षिणाद्रव्यविकल्पानां बहुलता काम्यकर्मणां लौकिकदोषपरिहार-दैवप्रसादन-प्रतीकात्मकं स्वरूपं सुस्पष्टं दर्शयति।

श्रौतपरम्परायां द्विशताधिकासु काम्येष्टिषु सर्वत्र दक्षिणाविधानं न दृश्यते; प्रायः केवलं त्रिंशत्सु एव काम्येष्टिषु दक्षिणा विधीयते इति ग्रन्थसमीक्षया ज्ञायते। एतासु अपि कतिपयेषु विशेषतः सप्ताष्टसु काम्येष्टिषु दक्षिणारूपेण हिरण्यदानम् आम्नातम् अस्ति। एताः इष्टयः स्वभावतः हिरण्यसम्बन्धिन्यः सन्ति, यतो हिरण्यं तेजः, आयुः, समृद्धिः, श्रीश्च इत्यादीनां प्रतीकं मन्यते।[22]

यद्यपि सामान्यतया *कामना–दक्षिणा–द्रव्य* इत्येतयोः आन्तरसम्बन्धः दृश्यते, यथा पशुकामेष्टौ धेनुदानम्, वृष्टिकामेष्टौ कृष्णद्रव्यप्रयोगः, रोगनिवारणकाम्येष्टिषु विकृतदक्षिणादानं तथापि सर्वासु काम्येष्टिषु दक्षिणाया लौकिकमूल्याधारितं महत्त्वं न प्रमुखतया स्वीक्रियते। दक्षिणा उत्तमा वा अनुत्तमा, आकर्षका वा अनाकर्षका इति विचारः न कर्तव्यः, सा तु यागस्य प्रतीकात्मक-धार्मिक-सम्पूरकावयवरूपेण अवगन्तव्या। ब्राह्मणग्रन्थेषु दक्षिणाया यज्ञसम्पत्तिकर्तृत्वं पुनःपुनः प्रतिपाद्यते 'दक्षिणया यज्ञः सम्पन्नः भवति'।[23] अनेन स्पष्टं भवति यत् दक्षिणा यज्ञफलसिद्धेः साधनभूता, न तु केवलम् ऋत्विजां पारितोषिकमात्रम्। एषा श्रद्धा, समर्पणभावः, देवताप्रीतिः तथा कर्मसमाप्तिसूचना इत्यादीनामाध्यात्मिकतत्त्वानां द्योतकं भवति। अतः दक्षिणाप्राप्तिः काम्येष्टीनां लक्ष्यं न भवति। श्रौतयागेषु 'विपुलदक्षिणालाभः' इति लौकिकसमृद्धिकेन्द्रितं ध्येयम् कदापि प्रमुखतया न दृष्टम्। अपि तु दक्षिणया यागस्य समृद्धिः, कर्मसम्पूर्णता च साध्यते इत्येव वैदिकदृष्टिः अत्र अवलोक्यते। एवं श्रौतकाम्येष्टिषु दक्षिणाविधानं केवलं दानपरम्परा न, अपि तु कर्ममीमांसात्मक-प्रतीकात्मक-धार्मिक-महत्त्वयुक्तं तत्त्वमिति निष्कर्षः सुस्पष्टतया प्रतिष्ठाप्यते।

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Iconography: Shiva Linga on the Head of Vitthal of Pandharpur

Ajaykumar Sharma

Lord Vishnu has always been the subject of a traditional iconographic text. If we consider the known images of Vitthal, old and new, including this four armed one at Taklibhan, we see that devotees portray Vitthal alternatively as a two –armed Visnu, a four-armed Visnu, or the cowherd Krsna (Gopal krsna). There is also variety with respect to his attributes and marks. Sometimes Vitthal holds a conch and a discus, sometimes a conch and a lotus. **What this means is that, the most indispensable sign of 'Vitthalness,' is Him standing with the hands on the hips".**

In "Vitthaladhyanamanasapuja," Baba Padhya first describes Vitthal's image of Pandarpur from its toenails to the top of its head, and then describes in order the way to worship it mentally. at the time of Afzhal Khan's campaign, it is suspected to have moved to Madhe for safekeeping, and it was brought back to Pandharpur after security had been restored. In order to preserve the memory of the god's stay, the citizens of Madhe must have made an image exactly like the one from Pandharpur and established it in their village; this is now the only known image that corresponds with the feature of the original.

All worshippers of Vitthal see him as a form of Gopal krsna. It is Gopal Krsna himself who lives in Pandharpur under the name "Vitthal." This means that Vitthal is a diety of Vaishnavas. According to these sthalapuranas and the faith they support, the four bases of the sacred points of Pandharpur are the holy place (ksetra) Pandharpur, the holy river (tirtha) Candrabhaga, the deity Vitthal, and the most excellent devotee (bhakta) Pundalik.

By taking darshan of all of these, which fulfils the wishes the way kamadhenu, the kalpataru and the chintamani do, Tukaram's soul gets great happiness, and his hunger and thirst disappear.

Vitthala in References to unity of Siva and Vishnu

Nama says, there should be no sense of duality here. Vishnu is Siva; Siva is Vishnu.

The saints declare the unity of Hari and Hara in Vitthal. There is a difference, though, between this view of unity and the understanding that "there is a 'Siva linga on Vitthal's head" expresses not the unity of Hari and Hara but the idea that Paramatma is one and our views are distorted according to what we know.

The atmosphere of harmonious synthesis precluded conflict between the apparent viewpoints of Saivas and Vaisnavas. Sivadas a Virasaiva Marathi saint, gives an attractive description of this harmony (Pasarkar 1983:83):

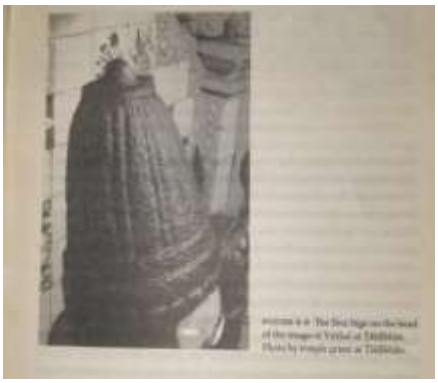
Panduranga stands, a Siva linga on his head;
The joy of that place is priceless.
Sivadas says, the true Kailas on earth
Is the place where Pundalik lived.

"There is no duality between Hari and Hara," Sivadas proclaims, and calls them mother and father (Pasarkar 1983:83):

It is noticed that some writers have tried to interpret Vitthal and the Shiv linga on the head as a shaivte God who was appropriated by vaishnavas. There have been many explanations given to substantiate their view point. in case of Pundalik Samadhi also they are surprised to see Shiva linga.

Ramchandra Dhere further states:

I know that many reputable devotees of Vitthal say that there is a Siva linga on the head of the image in Pandharpur. I have referred to all of those statements in my books, in discussing the union of Hari and Hara that the Marathi saints brought about. In fact, however, there is no Siva linga on the head of the image in Pandharpur. By convention the crown on the image's head is considered to be a Siva linga. In accordance with krsna's words in the Jnaneshvari, "I make him the crown on my head", this convention is fully correct. 'Making someone the crown on one's head" means 'taking him on one's head," paying him the highest respect. 'Siva is Vishnu-Krsna's greatest devotee, and so krsna wears him on his head in the form of a crown. In this sense, there is a Siva linga not only on the head of the Vitthal image at Madhe, but also on the heads of all the Vitthal images in each and every village.



What does the statement 'Shiva linga on head of Vitthal' convey?

The secular idea of trying to create a narrative of Shiva Linga and Vitthal are some different deities is a effort for artificial patch up concept. The paramatma does not require help. It is our own mind which trys to think according to what we know or perceive due to our limitations. The Shiva Linga on the head of Vitthal is one Paramatma itself.

Two concepts which we want to talk about:

The Linga as a Symbol of Creation, in the ancient Hindu scripture "Linga Purana" says that the foremost Linga is devoid of smell, color, and taste and is spoken of as Prakriti, or nature itself. Sukshma Sharira is spherical and it consists of microform of five components - 1. Earth, 2. Water, 3. Air, 4. Fire, 5. Space.

On death, Jivatma and Brahm, leave the heart and enter the microform of fire component and space component respectively, Senses leave the sense organs and enter microform of earth component, PRANA leaves the lungs and enters microform of air component Mana leaves the brain and enters microform of water component of Sukshma Sharira after death of Parthiv Sharira. Sukshma Sharira is spherical shaped and its diameter equals with the size of thumb.

This Sukshma Sharira is in the form of a Siva linga. There are things known and unknown to us. The truth does not depend on our knowledge of things. The word linga means "the form." We are calling it "the form" because when the un-manifest began to manifest itself, or in other words when creation began to happen, the first form that it took was that of an ellipsoid. A perfect ellipsoid is what we call as a linga. Creation always started as an ellipsoid or a linga, and then became many things. And we know from talk of Sants who have experienced that if you go into deep states of meditativeness,

before a point of absolute dissolution comes, once again the energy takes the form of an ellipsoid or a linga. So, the first form is of linga and the final form is linga. The in-between space is creation and what is beyond is Shiva.

The most prominent symbol of having Shiva linga on the head of Vitthal is the guidance being given to devotees that the Shiva linga we see indicates Sukshma Sharira of paramatma . There are mystics who have seen Sukshma Sharira in form of Shiva linga, next to the dead. This Shiva linga on the head of Vitthal symbolizes as the glimse of Atman of Paramatma in the form of Krsna as Vitthala. The significance of this Linga on head of Vitthala may be compared with energies of JyotiLingas .

Visoba Khecar, was the yogi guru of the Varkari poet-saint Namdev. He had linkages with the Varkari cult as well as the Nath tradition of Maharashtra. Incident of Namdev trying to shift Visoba s feet from Shiva Linga to another place is well known. But wherever Namdev placed Visoba's feet, a Linga sprang up beneath his feet. Thus, through his yogic powers, Visoba filled the whole temple with Shiva-lingas and proved to Namdev the omnipresence of God and prevailing innumerable beings as Lingas.

Second

Chakras are the body's energy centres. They are found in the astral body, running along the spine from the base to the crown of the head. Chakra is a Sanskrit term that translates to "wheel" or "cycle." There are seven major chakras that run from the base of your spine to the crown of your head. This age-old concept has found its way into various New Age thought types. the "Sahasrara" or Crown Chakra, the seventh and highest of the seven main chakras, is located not on the head itself, but several inches above the crown of the head, representing connection to the divine and higher consciousness.
These both Sukshma Sharira as well as sahasrara Chakra needs to be studied for further understanding of Shiva Linga on the head of Vitthala.

Horus- The sky God

Indian Art and Culture - Śarabha

Ajay M. Sonawane, Mrunal Uday Deshpande

India has inherited a glorious legacy of art and culture that has flourished for thousands of years. This rich heritage is evident in numerous artistic and architectural expressions across the country. Its origins can be traced back to the prehistoric period, and this cultural tradition has continued uninterrupted to the present day. The influence of the Vedic period was profound on various dynasties of ancient India, and its impact is consistently reflected in the literary traditions of those times. The Gupta period is regarded as the golden age of Puranic literature, during which the concept of divine incarnations (avatars) underwent extensive elaboration. During this period, the notion of divine manifestations became firmly established and underwent further development. This research study aims to present an in-depth analysis of the Śarabha avatar, one of the lesser-known yet significant manifestations of Shiva. According to Indian Puranic traditions, Śarabha is considered a major incarnation of Shiva.

Introduction

In Hindu mythology, Śarabha is a fascinating and powerful figure, believed to be an intense and fierce form of Lord Shiva. Described as a mythical creature with the body of a lion and the wings and beak of a bird, Śarabha's appearance is as extraordinary as his strength. He's often said to have eight legs—a symbol of incredible speed, stability, and unmatched might. This hybrid being isn't just visually striking; he's believed to possess strength greater than that of even lions and elephants. Legends say Śarabha could leap across vast valleys in a single bound, emphasizing not just his physical power but also his divine, otherworldly nature.

The story of Śarabha begins where the tale of Lord Vishnu's Narasimha avatar ends. After slaying the demon Hiranyakashipu, Narasimha's fury knew no bounds—his rage became so intense that it began to disturb the cosmic balance. To restore harmony, Lord Shiva took on a powerful and fearsome form: Śarabha. According to Shaivite traditions, Śarabha, with his immense strength and divine presence, calmed the furious Narasimha and brought peace back to the universe.

Śarabha is iconographically portrayed as a majestic blend of lion and bird, often captured in dynamic poses radiating energy and aggression. His eight legs symbolize unwavering strength and resolve. In some depictions, he also carries human features, underlining his divine and transcendental nature. Śarabha represents Shiva's dual aspects—as both destroyer of chaos and restorer of order. Though he isn't commonly worshipped in mainstream Hinduism, he holds a significant place in Shaivite and Tantric traditions. More than just a mythological creature, Śarabha stands as a powerful symbol of spiritual force, invincibility, and the harmonious blending of various celestial elements.

Literature review

In *Saṃskṛti Koṣa*, Śiva once took on a form that was part human, part animal, and part bird. Even after he defeated the fierce demon Hiraṇyakaśipu, his rage didn't settle—in fact, it only grew stronger, and he seemed ready to destroy the entire world. Worried and afraid, the gods and people turned to Śiva for help. To calm the chaos, Śiva took on the powerful form of Śarabha—a strange and mighty creature with two heads, eight legs, two wings, and a long tail. In this form, he faced and overpowered Nārasiṃha. After defeating him, Śiva wore his skin like a cloak and placed his head on his crown. This

dramatic story likely came to life as a way to show just how powerful and supreme Śiva truly is[1].

The legendary creature Śarabha is vividly described in South Indian texts like the Uttarakāmikāgama. According to the Kāmikāgama, Śarabha has two fierce, blood-red eyes. He has eight powerful legs like a lion—four firmly on the ground and the other four raised, ready to strike. His upper body is shaped like a human, but his face is that of a terrifying lion. He wears a tall, ornate crown, and his expression is wild and fearsome, with long fangs jutting out of his mouth. In this form, Śarabha is shown overpowering Nārasiṃha, holding him tightly between his legs. Nārasiṃha, now appearing more human than beast, is shown with his hands pressed together in a gesture of surrender and prayer. The text also gives deep symbolic meaning to Śiva's Śarabha form. His three eyes aren't just ordinary—they represent the Moon, the Sun, and Fire. His tongue is said to be like Vadavānala, the mythical fire believed to burn beneath the ocean. His wings are forms of the fierce goddess Kālī Durgā, his claws represent the power of Indra, his belly holds the destructive fire Kalāgni, and his thighs embody Time and Death. His overall force and energy are said to be Mahāvāyu, the great cosmic wind that moves the universe[2].

According to the *Śaiva Karaṇāgama*, Śarabha is described as an awe-inspiring and radiant form of Śiva, full of divine energy and power. He has eight strong legs, symbolizing steadiness like Mount Meru, the cosmic mountain. His entire being glows like the sun, and he has an astonishing thirty-two arms. His eyes aren't just ordinary—they are the Sun, the Moon, and Fire, showing how deeply connected he is to the forces of nature. On either side of him stand the fierce goddesses Durgā and Kālī, reminding us of the divine feminine strength that accompanies him.When Śarabha roars, it sounds like thunder tearing through the sky. His hair stands on end with energy, his arms are enormous, and his body is adorned with countless ornaments, reflecting his divine majesty. Each of his sixteen right hands holds a powerful symbol or weapon—like the Vajra (thunderbolt), a clenched fist, a hand raised in a gesture of protection (*abhaya mudrā*), a discus (*cakra*), a spear-like Śakti, a club (*gada*), a hook, a sword (*khadga*), the mystical Khaṭvāṅga, an axe (*parashu*), a rosary (*mālā*), a bone (*aṅgula*), a spear (*śūla*), a bow (*dhanus*), a pestle (*mudgara*), and a flame of fire. In his sixteen left hands, he holds equally meaningful objects: the gesture of granting boons (*varada mudrā*), a noose (*pāśa*), a mace (*gada*), an arrow (*śara*), a flag (*dhvaja*), a saw (*ārvi*), a small boar (*śaśi* or *varaḥ*), a conch (*śaṅkha*), a shield (*khetaka*), a serpent (*nāga*), a lotus flower (*padma*), a skull (*kapāla*), a book (*pustaka*), a lance (*sarpa*), a plough (*hala*), and in one hand, he gently holds the hand of Goddess Durgā—a touching moment of divine unity. One of the most striking images is that of a huge lion, caught painfully between Śarabha's tusks, thrashing in agony. This dramatic scene shows not just Śarabha's immense strength, but also the intensity of his divine mission to bring balance and restore order.

अथ शरभमूर्तिध्यानम् । शैवे कारणागमे
महामेरुसमाकारमष्टपादं रविप्रभम् ।
द्वात्रिंशद्बाहुसंयुक्तं सूर्यसोमाग्निलोचनम् ॥
दुर्गाकालीद्विपक्षं च सुतीक्ष्णधनगर्जितम् ।
ऊध्वकेशं महाबाहुं नानालंकारभूषितम् ॥
वज्रमुष्ट्यभयं चक्रं शक्तिदण्डांकुशौ तथा ।

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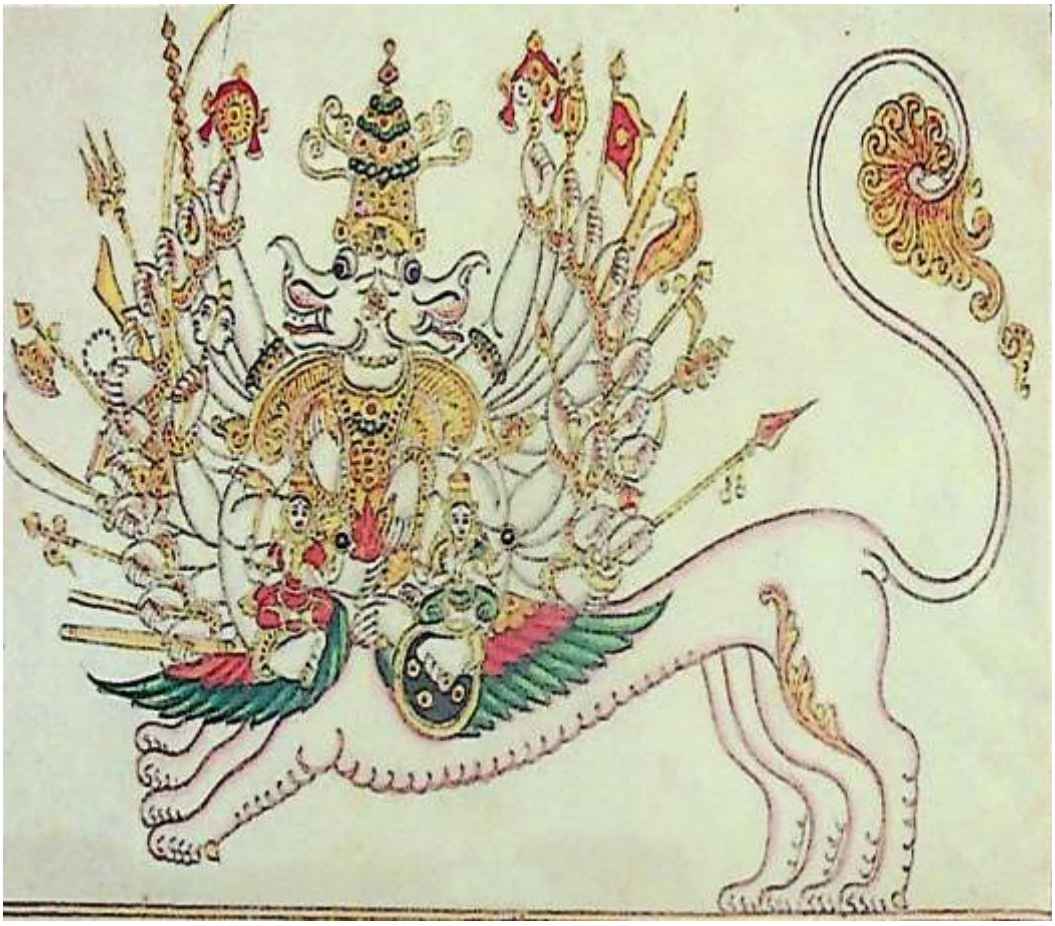
खड्गं खट्टाङ्गपरशुमक्षमालास्थिशूलकम् ॥
धनुश्च मुसलं चाग्निं दधानं दक्षिणैः करैः ।
वरदं पाशहस्तं च गदां बाणध्वजौ तथा ॥
क्रकचं क्रोडशङ्खौ च खेटं नागं च पङ्कजम् ।
कपालं पुस्तकं कुन्तं दुर्गाश्लिष्टकराम्बुजम् ॥
हलं वामे दधानं च भीषणं करपङ्कजैः ।
दंष्ट्रोल्लासिमहासिंहच्छटच्छटनिपीडितम् ॥[3]



In *Śiva Purāṇa*, after Lord Viṣṇu assumed the fierce form of Nārasiṃha to kill the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu, his rage remained uncontrollable. Prahlāda tried to calm him with devotion and praise, but failed. Distressed by Nārasiṃha's intense fury, the gods sought help from Lord Śiva. Śiva assured them and sent his warrior Virabhadra to reason with Nārasiṃha, urging him to abandon his wrath. However, Nārasiṃha refused to listen and declared himself the supreme power. Seeing that persuasion failed, Śiva took the formidable form of Śarabha. He overpowered Nārasiṃha, subdued him, and brought him to Mount Kailāśa. There, Virabhadra absorbed Nārasiṃha's energy, bringing peace. The gods, now relieved, expressed their gratitude by offering prayers to Lord Śiva[4].

Śarabha, an important divine figure in Śaiva tradition, held a special place in the religious life of Tamil Nādu during the Chola dynasty. The Chola kings, known for their

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deep devotion to Śiva, built many magnificent temples where images of Śarabha were prominently displayed. Among the most notable are the Vikramaśoliśvara Temple, built by King Vikrama Chola, and the Airāvatēśvara Temple at Darasuram. In these temples, Śarabha is often shown locked in a dramatic battle with Nārasiṃha, the man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu. During this time, worshipping Śarabha became a vital part of Śaiva religious practice. His sculptures are especially striking—found not only in Vikramaśoliśvara and Airāvatēśvara but also in the Tribhuvanam Temple in the Tanjore district. At Tribhuvanam, Śarabha is depicted with three legs, the body of a lion, and four human arms. Beneath him lies Nārasiṃha, shown in a humble, subdued posture. This powerful image is often seen as a reflection of the religious and philosophical tensions between Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions, expressed through temple art and storytelling. These representations of Śarabha are more than just carvings—they speak to the cultural and spiritual landscape of the time, showing how mythology, devotion, and royal patronage came together to shape the sacred spaces of South India[5].

Uma became the sovereign of women, and Saraswati the mistress of speech. Vishnu became the lord of illusion, while Brahma took charge as the master of the universe. The mighty Himalaya rose as the king of mountains, and Ganga was appointed the queen of all rivers. The oceans found their lord in Payonidhi. Brahma, the creator, chose the peepal tree as the chief among all trees. Among the celestial beings — the Gandharvas, Vidyadharas, and Kinnaras — Chitraratha was made their leader. Vasuki, born of intense energy, became the ruler of the serpents. Takshaka, also powerful, rose as another serpent king. Of the majestic elephants guarding the directions, I became Airavata, the mighty lord among them. Among birds, Suparna (Garuda) was made the master, and among horses, it was Ucchaihshravas who held dominion. The lion was made lord of the wild beasts, Vrishabha of the cows, and Sharabha of all the forest creatures. Among generals, the unmatched Skanda (Kartikeya) took command. For the sacred texts — the Shrutis and Smritis — Lakulisha, an incarnation of Shiva, became their master. And the guardians of the directions were appointed in order: Sudharma, Shankhapada, Ketuman, and Hemaroma[6].

According to some anthropologists, animal stories have been passed down through oral tradition since the pre-agricultural era. In the *Parjanya Sukta* (a Vedic hymn about rain), Parjanya—the rain deity—is described with imagery comparing him to a horse, and in some places, even to a lion. Animals have always had a prominent place in ancient tales, and across many cultures, they have been revered as divine beings. In ancient civilizations like Greece, Aetherian culture, and the Bobbio-Leonian tradition, animals were worshipped as deities. Similarly, in Indian traditions such as the Indus-Saraswati civilization, the Vedic and Dravidian cultures, animals and birds have been considered sacred and divine. The ancient Egyptian civilization, for instance, had the cat as a revered goddess. The lion, in particular, holds a strong symbolic presence. In the *Rigveda*, the roar of the lion is likened to the mighty force of the wind. In the *Vayu Purana*, there's a tale involving a lion that appears during a ritual (yajna) that King Daksha organized without inviting Lord Shiva. Angered by the exclusion, Shiva manifests as a fierce lion-like being and storms into the ritual site. The chaos seems unending, so to bring it to a close, Shiva takes the lion form and places it inside his abode, calming the storm[7].

[5] https://www.cottage9.com/blog/when-shiva-became-sarabeshwara-to-combat-narasimha/
[6] Joshi, Pr,N. *Linga Puran*. Pune: Prasad Prakashan
[7] Ahirrao,Pr.R, Bhave,H.A. Bhartiy Shilapatil Prani. Pune: Varada Prakashan 2005

Cultural Significance

Airavateshwar/ Rajrajeshwar Temple, Dharasur, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, Build by, Rajaraja Chol II (1143 to 1173 CE) and Shiva Temple, kansya statue Tribhuvan, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu[8].

n modern-day Kanpur district, at the Mukta Devi temple, there is a depiction of Shiva and Parvati standing alongside a lion. In Chaitra village, Agra district, a lion is carved onto a Shiva lingam. In the Shakti tradition, Parvati is known to ride a lion, and in some places, even Shiva is believed to have the lion as his mount. The symbolism of the lion continues to echo power, divinity, and ancient connection across cultures and traditions[9].

Śiva

Śiva is considered one of the most ancient deities, with his origins traceable back to the Rudra mentioned in the Ṛgveda Saṃhitā. Over time, this fierce Vedic deity evolved into the more complex and deeply philosophical figure of Śiva. In Indian thought, a well-known divine trinity is often invoked: Brahmā as the Creator, Viṣṇu as the Preserver, and Śiva as the Destroyer—though Śiva is also associated with regeneration and transformation.

The notion that Śiva predates the Vedic period is supported by archaeological findings from the Indus Valley Civilization, particularly a seal discovered in Mohenjo-

[8] Ahirrao,Pr.R, Bhave, H.A. Bhartiy Shilapatil Prani. Pune: Varada Prakashan 2005
[9] Ahirrao,Pr.R, Bhave, H.A. Bhartiy Shilapatil Prani. Pune: Varada Prakashan 2005

dāro. This seal depicts a figure seated in a yogic posture, surrounded by animals—often identified as "Pāśupati," the lord of animals. Many scholars believe this figure may represent a proto-form of Śiva. Over time, the worship of Śiva evolved into the widespread practice of liṅga worship, which became deeply embedded in Indian spiritual traditions.

Rudra, the precursor to Śiva, is mentioned not only in the Ṛgveda but also in other ancient texts like the Vājaseṇeyi Saṃhitā, Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. The earliest reference to Śaivite devotees can even be found in Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, where the term "Śivādhibhūvan" appears, possibly indicating the early presence of Śaiva sects.

It was the Purāṇic literature that significantly popularized Śiva's image and narratives. Texts like the *Śiva Purāṇa*, *Skanda Purāṇa*, and many other related scriptures played a vital role in shaping his mythology and worship.

Let us briefly explore a few of Śiva's fierce, transformative forms:

1. **Kāmāntaka** – To enable the birth of Kartikeya, destined to slay the demon Tārakāsura, Śiva needed to be awakened from his deep meditation. Indra, king of the gods, enlisted Kamadeva (the god of love) to ignite desire in Śiva. But upon being disturbed, Śiva opened his third eye and reduced Kāma to ashes.
2. **Gajāsura Samhāra (Gajāsurāntaka)** – In Vārāṇasī, a demon assumed the form of an elephant and tried to destroy the sacred Liṅgaṃ at the Kṛttivāsēśvara temple. Śiva, enraged, vanquished the demon with his trident.
3. **Yamāntaka** – When Yama, the god of death, came to claim the soul of Śiva's young devotee Mārkaṇḍeya, Śiva emerged from the liṅga and struck Yama down, protecting his devotee and granting him immortality.
4. **Brahmā-Śiracheḍaka (Slayer of Brahmā's fifth head)** – At the urging of the sages, Brahmā proclaimed himself the sole creator of the universe, using disrespectful words toward Śiva. In response, Śiva decapitated Brahmā's fifth head, punishing his arrogance.
5. **Tripurāntaka** – The sons of the demon Tārakāsura—Tārakākṣa, Vidyunmāli, and Kamalakṣa—built three virtually indestructible fortresses. According to a boon, they could only be destroyed simultaneously. Śiva fulfilled this condition and annihilated them all with a single divine arrow.
6. **Śarabha** – As mentioned earlier, this form represents Śiva's transformation into a part-lion, part-bird beast to pacify the raging Nārasiṃha avatāra of Viṣṇu, highlighting a narrative of divine intervention and balance.
7. **Bhairava** – Bhairava is considered a terrifying yet protective form of Śiva. There are 64 forms of Bhairava, grouped into eight categories, each accompanied by a corresponding Yoginī.

Sectarian Conflict between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism

Śiva did not initially hold a central place in the Vedic pantheon, whereas Viṣṇu received relatively more prominence. Over time, tensions emerged between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism—two major sects of Hinduism. Many thinkers have noted that Viṣṇu came to be seen as the god of the elite, while Śiva was embraced by the common people, particularly the marginalized and oppressed.

Śiva was portrayed as an unconventional deity—an ascetic who resided in cremation grounds, adorned himself with ashes from funeral pyres, wore garlands of skulls, and was always surrounded by spirits and ghosts. These depictions were

sometimes used to belittle him, as in the case of Dakṣa, a staunch Viṣṇu devotee, who scorned Śiva as unclean and unfit for divine respect.

One prominent example of sectarian symbolism is found in the legend of **Śarabha**. After Viṣṇu's Nārasiṃha avatāra became uncontrollably enraged, Śiva assumed the form of Śarabha to subdue him. Similar narratives exist surrounding Viṣṇu's Varāha (boar) avatāra. These stories were possibly shaped to assert the superiority of Śiva over Viṣṇu, reflecting the theological competition between the two sects.
Ultimately, the figure of Śarabha can be seen as a symbolic representation of the Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava rivalry, expressing the belief among Śaivites that their chosen deity was the mightiest of all.

Conclusion

In this research essay, we have aimed to present a detailed exploration of the concept of Śiva and his fierce manifestation—Śarabha. Over the years, the image of Śarabha has often been mistakenly equated with other composite mythical creatures, though such associations, upon closer examination, appear to overlook key symbolic and structural differences. Śarabha, as we have shown, is a distinct concept—both symbolically and structurally—rooted deeply in Indian literature and mythology.

This study has primarily focused on presenting the true nature and conceptual identity of Śarabha. By understanding the attributes and origins of Śarabha in this context, readers will be able to discern the differences between Śarabha and other similar mythical beings often confused with him.

In recent decades, many depictions of other mythical beasts have been wrongly identified and labelled as Śarabha. This misrepresentation has led to confusion and misinformation. We've presented various characteristics and textual References related to Śarabha to support a clearer understanding.

The scope of this research focuses primarily on the early traits and textual References to Śarabha. However, there is still vast potential to further explore how Śarabha appears in architecture, iconography, and artistic traditions. We look forward to presenting those aspects in detail in our upcoming work.

Art and Its Effects on Human Beings

Mira Sontakke

Introduction

When we reflect on art, we quickly realize how difficult it is to define. One succinct definition I encountered states that "any action done skillfully is art." Art permeates our daily lives, often unnoticed—whether it be in cooking, arranging a bookshelf, writing, or singing for pleasure or performance. Art is everywhere.
Some pursue art as a hobby, while others take it up professionally. Regardless of the form or intention, art generally functions as an aesthetic representation of the world around us. It resonates with individuals on varying levels, making it universally accessible yet uniquely interpreted.

Art has fascinated scholars since ancient times. One significant contribution comes from Bharata Muni, whose Nāṭyaśāstra provides profound insights into the emotional and psychological dimensions of art. This paper draws upon his seminal Rasa theory to examine the psychological impact of art—particularly music—on human beings.

Theory

नहि रसादृते कश्चिदर्थः प्रवर्तते।

“Nothing in this world proceeds without rasa.” – Nāṭyaśāstra

This foundational verse from Bharata Muni emphasizes that rasa is the essence of all art forms. The term rasa—meaning essence, flavor, or emotion—captures the aesthetic experience that art aims to evoke. As Bharata Muni explains, art becomes meaningful when it evokes emotional awareness in the spectator. This process is elaborated in the Rasa Sūtra, which describes how emotional experiences (rasa) are generated through a combination of factors.

विभावानुभावयुतो ह्यङ्गवत्समाश्रयः। सञ्चारिभिस्तु संयुक्तः स्थायिभावश्च रसं नयेत्।

“When vibhāva (cause), anubhāva (effect), and vyabhicāribhāva (transitory emotions) are united with a sthāyibhāva (dominant emotion), rasa is born.”

Vibhāva refers to the circumstances or stimuli that elicit a particular emotion.
- *Anubhāva* refers to the external expressions—gestures, facial expressions, movements—used to convey internal emotions.
- *Vyabhicāribhāva* are the fleeting or transitional emotions that support the main emotional tone.
- *Sthāyibhāva* is the stable, dominant emotion experienced by the observer.

The resulting rasa is often a mental and emotional experience that may defy verbal articulation. Yet, it is deeply felt—art can evoke in us emotions we have never previously known. For example, a dancer portraying a blind character may instantly stir empathy. This is not merely an aesthetic effect; it is a psychological one that engages both mind and heart.

A rāga in classical music exemplifies this. It is not merely a melodic sequence; it is an emotional landscape. A rāga may express longing, serenity, or joy, evoking internal reactions beyond conscious control. Similarly, a painting might capture the isolation of soldiers at war, or a sculpture might awaken a sense of the divine.

The Role of Music

Music, more than any other art form, is an inseparable part of daily life. It differs from noise in that it consists of harmoniously arranged sounds within a temporal framework. While noise may have a disturbing effect, music generally produces a positive psychological response.

Although the emotional effect of music may vary by individual, studies show that about 95% of the time, music induces pleasant emotions—especially when the listener can relate to the music. Music has also been shown to benefit mental and physical health. Research indicates that sound affects fetuses and infants by stimulating cognitive development, auditory processing, memory, and emotional regulation.

Moreover, music therapy has shown promise in treating neurological disorders and chronic illnesses. Listening to music regularly has been associated with reduced stress and anxiety, improved mental health, and enhanced creativity. People suffering from mental illnesses often respond positively to music therapy, and many mental health practitioners now incorporate music into treatment.

While these findings are promising, it is important to note that they are not yet conclusive.

Conclusion

Art is a subjective and abstract concept, with rasa as its essence. The ultimate aim of rasa is to create an emotionally resonant and aesthetically pleasing experience. While there are many forms of art, music stands out as the most universally accessible. Not everyone may appreciate a painting or a dance performance, but nearly everyone can experience and enjoy music. Children may not understand complex choreography, but they can respond to rhythm and melody.

Music is unique in that it leaves no tangible trace—it cannot be seen or touched after performance, only felt. This ephemeral nature makes it a deeply personal form of art, experienced through the heart and mind. Today, we have access to a wide array of musical genres—classical, light music, Bollywood, Western, K-pop, and more. Each person finds resonance in at least one of these, and for many, music becomes a means of healing.

Though this paper has focused on the effects of music, future research may extend to other art forms. I close with a quote by Rabindranath Tagore:
“Music fills the infinite; this has been muffled by the mist of our hearts.”

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Preliminary Study of Temples and Archaeological Remains Between Shere and Kondethar Villages, Taluka Mulshi, District Pune

Abhijit Thite

Introduction

The temples discussed here are situated on elevated and ecologically significant landscapes, forming part of a hill-centric religious geography. This study incorporates recent fieldwork and observations from previously published archaeological explorations (Thite 2024), offering a contextual reading of these sacred sites as both living religious centers and archaeological records of regional history. References to historical ports like Chaul (Gogte 2006) and early textual descriptions of Indian trade (Schoff 1912) help situate these findings within broader networks of commerce and pilgrimage.

Padmavati Devi, Shere

Situated 6 km from Kondhvale (27 hero stones and a brick structure is documented), the Padmavati temple is a major goddess shrine perched on a hill. The main idol represents Mahishasuramardini and is flanked by multiple ancillary shrines, reflecting both multiplicity in goddess forms and localized ritual practices. The site includes vermillion-smeared stones (Tandals), lion-mounted figures, and smaller deity representations like Kamalja, a guest deity who demands vegetarian offerings, indicating syncretism in dietary customs tied to devotion.

Importantly, the temple is actively engaged in contemporary ritual life. The Sasan Kathyas (ritual sticks) arriving on the Chaitra full moon from nearby shrines reaffirm links with other regional temples, reinforcing ritual memory and devotional circulation. Despite lacking a formal sacred grove, the site preserves tree clusters, suggesting ecological reverence like other devrais.

The original site of Padmavati lies higher up the hill, requiring a 30-minute ascent. It features three vermillion-smeared stones identified as Padmavati, Chedoba, and Kalsari - servants of the goddess. This pattern reflects a recurring theme: localized guardian figures accompanying the principal deity, a tradition mirrored in other sites.

Vinzai Devi, Tamhini

Located in a scenic village at the foothills of the Tamhini Ghat, the Vinzai Devi temple identifies its goddess with Vindhyavasini. Here too, guest deities Kamalja, Vaghjai, Shirkai, Mahalaxmi, and Mahasaraswati flank the central idol. The temple's sacred grove (devrai), hero stones, sati stones, and medieval sculptures indicate long-standing sacred occupancy.

The original site of the goddess is atop the hill behind the current temple. As with Padmavati, a legend of the goddess halting after being looked back at during descent enshrines her at a specific point. Such narratives reflect mythic memory tied to migration and landscape marking.

Somjai Devi, Nive

Five kilometers from Tamhini, the roadside temple of Somjai Devi also features medieval iconography and hero stones. Five of the nine sculptures are of Mahishasuramardini. Hero stones date to the 12th–13th centuries CE - coinciding with similar findings in Kondhavale and Tamhini. The newly constructed temple has revived worship with a sanctum flanked by Kamalja and Bhairoba.

Nearby, the Somjaishwar site, with Satavahana-period steps and tanks (Marathe 2016), indicates the presence of a continuous sacred geography tied to ancient migration and movement across the ghats.

Kalkai Devi

The Kalkai Devi temple is surrounded by forest and ancient paths. The temple, restored in 2016, features multiple vermillion-smeared stones, a triangular stone representing her attendant, and nonveg offerings made in the courtyard. Its location near traditional migratory trails and old settlements like Umbardi aligns it with the broader sacred geography of the region.

Interpreting the Archaeological and Ritual Landscape

The study of hero stones, particularly at Kondhavale, Tamhini, and Nive, provides archaeological confirmation of the area's long-standing socio-political dynamics. The presence of 27 hero stones at Kondhavale, some depicting cattle rescue, battle deaths, and even a female warrior, suggests local conflict, defense activities, and a community ethos valorizing martial deeds and collective memory (Thite 2024).

These shrines and markers indicate:

- An interconnected web of ritual centers.
- Continuous use and migration from coastal Konkan regions to inland Pune.
- A legacy of warrior cults and defensive settlements, now ritualized through memory stones.
- The transformation of forested trade trails into sacred landscapes.

These findings align with broader studies of religious migration and material culture in western India (Ray 1986; Nagaraju 1981). The settlements, temples, and devrais must be read not as isolated entities but as co-constitutive with trade, movement, and memory.

Migration, Trade, and Settlement Patterns

The presence of hero stones, sati stones, and semi-skilled Mahishasuramardini sculptures across multiple sites strongly implies a sustained phase of migration and settlement between the 11th and 13th centuries CE. Trade routes - such as the Kundalika Valley–Paratewadi route and Lingya Pass - provided economic arteries that likely facilitated the movement of artisans, warriors, and deities.

References to ancient ports like Chaul (Gogte 2006) and trade descriptions in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (Schoff 1912) support the theory of cultural influx from coastal regions toward the Deccan. The CKP (Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu) communities who revere Vinzai have traditional roots in Konkan - suggesting that their migration across the Sahyadri Ghats brought along both deities and ritual practices.

Conclusion

The Mulshi–Tamhini route presents a layered landscape where myth, movement, and memory converge. Sacred sites like Padmavati and Vinzai reflect continuity from ancient hill-top shrines to modern-day goddess worship, with the iconography of Mahishasuramardini forming a unifying visual language. Hero stones and medieval remains underscore the region's martial past and ritual valorization of death in battle.

This confluence of archaeology, oral tradition, and ecological sanctity offers a template for understanding localized religiosity in Western India. Future studies must integrate environmental history, oral narratives, and GIS mapping to further decode the devotional geographies of this richly layered terrain.

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Importance of 'Sharanas' in Lingayat Religion and Literature

Nalini Waghmare

Introduction

The aim of all the Religions of the world is the Realization of the Divine. This realization assures freedom from pain so common to moral life. By the power of intuition man becomes conscious of his Divine nature and every religion instituted by man has the one goal of reaching the Highest in spirit, which results in the natural emancipation from bondage. The yearning for this emancipation begins in a feeble way in the semi-civilized heart, but has civilization and refinement grow more effective, more and more definite forms come to be prescribed for the purpose of the emancipation. The forms do vary, but the goal is the same. (Swami Dayanand 2005, 218-219).

It is important to include religion and spirituality in the helping process in order to work ethically in the profession. Spirituality cannot be taught, bought or imported. It is a live experience. It is a way of life and once a person attains this knowledge it is expressed in the he or she possesses.

Lingayat is one of the major religious communities in India. Lingayat is also known as Virasaiva. Lingayat have their own religion, culture, philosophy, literature, ideology, ritualism, code of conduct, social system, and a distinctive view of life and way of life. Women saints of Lingayat contributed a lot to enrich the Virasaiva religion, literature and culture. (H.M.Marulasiddaiah 1998,20-23).

Vachana Sahitya

Vachana is a literary form in Kannada literature; Vachana literally means a saying or something said. Also termed as cryptic sayings or musings. It was the form of expression chosen by the Sharanas of 12th century to communicate their ideas, thoughts, sentiments, emotions and mystical experiences to the common masses. (Lohit D.Naikar , 2012, 39-40.) In 12th century 770 Vachanakaras and under them 33-woman Vachanakaras composed the Vachanas. (S.S.Wodeyar 1965, 18.).

Using Sharana as a designation

'Sharana' refers to the other companions of Mahatma Basava. The word "Sharana" is Basava period. The term "Sharana" refers to virtuous behavior and morality. One who makes a living by living in servitude. 770 of these followers joined Anubhava Mantapa as members. Names like Sharana, Sharanaappa, Sharanavaya, Sharanabasappa, and Sharanamma are common among the Lingayat community. Some go by surnames such as Refugee, Sharanath, Sharane, etc. Names and surnames are examples of the Sharana cultural legacy that have been passed down from generation to generation. (Lohit D.Naikar , 2012,39-40.). We have fostered the legacy of Sharanas by extending their names.

Salutations to the Sharanas

Greetings conceal history as well. It has been done in accordance with custom. Traditionally, the Lingayat community in India has been welcomed as refugees, or Sharnartha. The term "Sharana" was first used by Mahatma Basavanna to refer to Sharana Haralayya. (S.S.Wodeyar , 1965, 18). All of the refugees greeted one another as Sharana in the twelfth century. The all Lingayat community still follows the same customs today. It has been passed down to us via inheritance. This greeting style reflects the Sharana culture's heritage. 'Sharanusharnarthi' is how members of the Lingayat community greet one another.

The names of Akka (sister), Anna (brother), and Appa (father) to Sharanas

During the Basava period, it was common to call Anna to Sharana. It was said, "Anna, Akka." Everybody had an Anna. Sharana used to be referred to by elders as Appa, Anna, and Akka with warmth. (Suryakant Ghugare , 1995, 35-43.) In Lingayat community, the elder generation still follows the same customs. For instance, Basaya Gunappa, Irpya, and Sharanaappa. Mahadanya, Madolappa, Ghalappa, Lingappa, Rajanna, Bhimanna, Basavanna, Kasanna, Danamma, Gauramma, Nagmya Iranna, and Murgappa. There are still many names in the Lingayat community that are similar to Kantappa. Additionally, it is observed that the sub-castes of Lingayat Mali, Kumbhar, Burud, Gawli, Teli, Jangam, Sutar, Lohar, Pancham, Dikshivant, Dohar, Charmkar, Matang, and Devang Koshti readily append the adjective "Appa" to their names.

Honoring Sharana

Every year, Sharana celebrations are held in a number of mathas Karnataka (Nalini Waghmare 2015, 51-69) and Maharashtra locations. The fair and festivities are over. For example, the commemorations of Sharana include the Gaddayatra to Solapur, the Yatra to Guddapur Danamma, the Yatra to Jevali, Devarhallali, and Allamprabhu hill, the Yatra to Alte village, the Yatra to the Basavanna temple, and other locations. Even now, we have managed to preserve the Sharana cultural legacy. In Karnataka monthly, quarterly and yearly fairs and festivals are organized and arranged by the devotees to tribute to these Sharanas of 12^{th} century.

Rituals of Istalinga

On the fifth day of the baby's life, the Linga is tied to the infant in the India Lingayat community. Istalinga rites are also part of marriage. Everybody is always wearing an Istalinga around their neck. From generation to generation, people have carried on the tradition of beginning their daily routine with Istalinga Yoga. We call death Lingiyakya. The corpse is buried with an Istalinga on the hands. The Lingayat community has a distinct identity known as "Istalinga."(Nalini Waghmare 2015,51-69).

Dietary behavior

Nonviolence was valued by Basaveshwara and Sharanas, who was against violence. His primary teachings were non-violence and truthfulness. One ought to walk the path of peace, exhibit moderation, virtue, humility, and nonviolence. We ought to behave humanely and with integrity. The Lingayat community of India is the one who ignited Sharana's life message. This society values humility, calmness, and patience. Their reputation as a peaceful community endures to this day. The Lingayat community is leading the way in health care by abstaining from all forms of addiction and eating vegetarianism.

The ideal set by Sharana, who lived a life as a "pure vegetarian" and only ate sattavic food, has been upheld by the Lingayat society of today. The bulk of people are still either non-vegetarians or strict vegetarians today. As a result, these individuals continue to enjoy respect, status, and standing in society.

Kayaka (Work) and Dasoha (Service to Society)

Basaveshwara’s unique contributions to world philosophy are the concepts of Kayaka and Dasoha. In this regard the principles of Kayaka and Dasoha have special significance which aims at both –economic and spiritual advancement. everyone earned his bread by honest labour, but made over the surplus value of his earning back to society. Basaveshwara’s socialism finds expression through the Vachanas: (H.Deverappa, 1967,143-144).

The tradition of Annadasoha (food providing to devotees)

The Sharana culture placed great importance on Annadasoha. Feeding the Sharana Jangama on their missionary tour with 'Annadana' was a religious obligation. Since the Sharanas, the Lingayat community has practiced providing pure sattvic food items such as saar, rice roti, milk, curd, ghee, buttermilk, ambil, khichda, bhajji, vegetables, chutney, and kheer in Dasoha. A daily Annadasoh is still held in thousands of Karnataka Virakta Mathas in Maharashtra, Andrapradesh and Karanataka. For example, Annadasoh is also regularly held in Guddapur Danamma and Solapur Siddharameshwar and in the Mathas of Karnataka. In addition, the Lingayat community of India upholds the Annadasoha tradition through house to house, during yatras, and other events. The festival 'Vave Amavasya' is a festival influenced by Sharana culture and is celebrated only in the border areas. Thus, the tradition of Anna Dasoha continues till today through inheritance.

The basic Characteristics of Sharanas in Vachana Literature:

According to *Sharanas* the world is *Prasad* (grace) of God. The money, woman and land created by him are also his *Prasada* (grace). We should not show much attachment towards them and we should not shun them either. We must accept them as His Prasada.

The Sharana must have the constancy to say
'I will not have another's wealth'
The Sharvana must have the constancy to say
'I will not have another's wife'
The Sharana must have the constancy to say
'I will not have another's god'
The Sharana must have the constancy to say
"Linga and Jangama are one"
The Sharana must have the constancy to say
"prasada is the truth"
Lord Kudala Sangama disclaims
Such men as have no constancy.

The *Sharana* is one who does not aspire for another's wealth, has no longing for another's wife, believes only one God, makes no difference between the *Linga* (God) and *Jangama* (holy man or Society) and accepts whatever comes in life as God's grace, failing which God will not approve if him as his true devotee.

Virasaivism attaches utmost importance to the inward and outward purity of an individual. The internal as well as external purity of an individual depends upon the Karmas only. According to Basaveshwara, an individual should preserve the purity in order to achieve godliness. He has said in one of his Vachana

Thou shalt not steal nor kill,
Be angry with no one,
Nor scorn another man,
Nor glory in thyself,
Nor others hold to blame
This is your inward purity,
This is your outward purity;
This is the way to win our lord
Kudala Sangama.

In his turn, Allama Prabhu himself was a subject for critical questioning by the Sharanas, Ayadakki Marayya and Nuliya Chandayya. Marayya upheld the superiority of social labour (Kayaka) to Guru, Linga and Jangama. He maintained the position that for the tendering dedicated labour, social labour is tantamount to divine awareness, since Siva Himself must be an activist, a working godhead (M.Manjappa Hardekar's Bangalore, 1990,150)

When one is involved in social labour
One should forget the sight of the Guru
And forget even the worship of the Linga
Even when a Jangama is nearby,
One should ignore obligation to him.
Since doing social labour is to reach heaven
The Amareshwara was Linga through such labour?

The Sharanas, who have called the Guru a god, have also designated the Jangama as a God. The equivalence between the Guru, Linga and Jangama is central to the Sharana tradition. To emphasize this centrality, Allama Prabhu wrote (L.Basavaraju, 1969, 72):

A thing heavy against heaviness became Guru,
It became itself the Linga,
It became itself Jangama,
And it turned a gift of grace. (A.P.V.11)

Basavanna made the same point when he said "I shall call Linga a Jangama, and Jangama a Linga" (B.V.308, 676, 839, 882). Another Sharana, Hadapada Appanna, put it epigrammatically by saying, "The face of Jangama is Linga." (S.S.Bhusanurmath and Armando Menezes, 1968, 127-128).

Basaveshwara condemned ill politeness in speech and behaviour. Basaveshwara stated that Sharanas words should be (Deveerappa, 1967, 268-269):

"If you should speak, your words should be
pearls that are string upon a thread
If you should speak, your words should be
Like luster by the ruby shed.
If you should speak, your words should be
A crystal's flash that cleaves the blue
If you should speak, great God must say
Ay, ay that is very true!
But if your deed betrays your word,
Can Kudalasangama care for you.

This clearly revels the idea of humanism that one can find in his thoughts and actions. For example, he used to call Kakkayya, Chenayya, Machayya, though they were untouchables. But Basaveshwara never treated such persons as untouchables and never called them in a derogatory, manner. He emphasized the politeness in speech.

Since the Sharanas give importance to the life here and now' they have developed an innovative economy quite different from the pre-Sharana period. It is based on puritan ethic. In the words of Ramanujan, Sharans faith is "a religion of arbitrary grace, with a doctrine of the mystical chosen elect, replacing a social hierarchy –by –birth with a mystical hierarchy –by –experience; doctrine of work as worship leading to a puritan ethic; monotheism and evahelism, a mixture of intolerance of humanism, harsh and tender. (A.K.Ramanujan , 1973, 54).

Kayaka (Work) and Dasoha (Service to Society)

Basaveshwara's unique contributions to world philosophy are the concepts of Kayaka and Dasoha. In this regard the principles of Kayaka and Dasoha have special significance which aims at both –economic and spiritual advancement. everyone earned his bread by honest labour, but made ovr the surplus value of his earning back to society. Basaveshwara's socialism finds expression through the Vachanas:(H.Deveerappa, 1967, 141 -142).

No man has a right to live on this earth without work. In other words, work or labour is a true way of worship of the universal God. That work which is in the interest of society, that is True and Pure is described by the great prophet Basavanna as "Kayaka". Meaning the physical labour wherein all the three components Body, Mind and Soul are involved. He gave the slogan"Kayakave Kailasa" i.e. True work is the very abode of Divinity. (Mate Mahadevi , 2004, 12).

The Kayaka principle accepted in the Anubhava Mantapa. This theme had the implications of socio-economic reforms for peace and prosperity; production leads to wealth; and that wealth is distributed satisfactory in the society by way of 'Dasoha' that way society lives in peace and there is no scope for any struggle or disturbance. It's for reaching effects cannot however be described here for want of space and in the context of the subject under study. The essential ingredients of this "Theory" could be briefly summarized thus.

Sharanas who brought about revolution through which they uprooted the superstitions, exploitative and ritualistic practice considered external opulence as superfluous and evaporative like a lamp exposed to the winds or the people gathered in a market place. Therefore, external or physical poverty is no indication of the spiritual or mental poverty. The Sharanas could be poor
Externally but they are rich inside. Therefore, Vachanakaras have laid stress on the need for enriching the soul and the spirit rather than accumulating unsteady wealth. They have described the spiritual richness as against the physical richness in various ways whenever an occasion arises. Basava, for example, considers the poor Sharanas are rich in their heart. (Nalini Waghmare, 2017, 87). In these words,

"Look at their hearth, they are poor:
Look at their hearts, they are rich:
Look at their wealth, they are poor;
But they are richly endowed
With a great heart!
Kudala Snaga's Sharanas
Are heroes without pluck!
Whom could I
Compare them to?

Hadapada Lingamma gave importance of Sharana in one of her Vachana (M.M. Kalburgi,2012, 458):

To see there are no eyes;
To hear there are no ears;
To smell there is no nose;
To speak there is no tongue;
To hold there are no legs;
To think there is no mind.
When thought thus ripened
United with the feet of the sharana
I became blissfully happy

O Appannapriya Chennabasavanna

In one of Lingamma Vachana the presence of Sharana mentioned as below:

Ayya
When there is precious stone right in front the eyes
Why don't they learn to see it?
When there is an ocean of milk right in front of the door
Why desire spring waters?
When there is the great sarana right in front of the eyes
Why say at there is darkness,
Why look for another god
When that great sarana is
Our Appannapriya Chennabasavanna?

According to Basaveshwara and his followers the principles that promote individuality and collective pervasion is religion. The base of this religion is compassion (H.Deveerappa, 1967, 126):

What is religion without compassion?
All living beings should possess compassion
Compassion in the foundation of religion Kudalasangamadeva

Human race is tied by a single thread of one family. Therefore, we must embrace mutually as members of one family. Consider all are equal says Basava in his Vachana (H.Deveerappa, 1967, 57):

Let them not say, O Lord,
Whose is he, whose, O whose?
Let them say rather, 'he is ours,
He is ours; he is ours!'
O Kudalasangama Lord, let me be
A son of Thine own house!

Basaveshwara's socialism finds expression through the Vachana (H.Deveerappa, 1967, 151):

Does not a crow on seeing a crub,
Call to its flcok?
Does not a hen, on finding a morsel,
Call clacking to her brood?
If, being a bhakta, a man lacks loyalty
To his own faith,
He is worse than hen or crow,
O Kudalasangama Lord!

We should dedicate all that we have to society. And then what we receive back from society according to our needs will be life-giving. Basaveshwara also stressed the promotion of the collective interest. He emphasized the service of humanity. This makes us to view Basaveshwara as a socialist thinker. As a socialist thinker he encourages the economic equality, equitable distribution of wealth, renunciation of property in favour of society and no room for exploitation.

The famous Kannada poet Sarvajna states in one of his Vachanas (Virupakshappa, 2001, 180):

Do not think that your
Eyes, tongue and
Minds are yours';
Do not say that others
Can harm you;
It is these sense organs of yours
Which can harm you, O Sarvajna.

Therefore, control your sense organs, particularly the mind which is the seed for all activities. If we could engage our mind in right thinking and in right actions no catastrophe can fall on us. This is the immortal message of the *Sharanas.* We have to evolve our personality in the light of this message.

Findings and Conclusions:

1. Basavanna was the first to have read the path of religion and brought secularism in social and political life. He was the first to establish a democracy and a parliament based on religion. Anubhava Mantapa which was a spiritual and social parliament was founded by Basavanna long before the British parliament had come into existence. This should be considered as India's spiritual contribution to the world.
2. In support of this, the example of the 12th century could be cited. The Sharanas, who made spirituality, their way of life, used it as background, for everything they did. The Sharanas who welfare of every living creature, brought many progressive ideas, such as, labour, honest and pure: dignity of labour; equality to woman (with men); economic equality; removal of difference based on caste; condemnation of sacrifices involving the killing of animals etc.
3. Basaveshwara and Vachanakaras fought for humanity. Every person has to be respected. So, self – respect, self-identity and humanity thoughts are propagated in society. Humanity to all is our culture. So, Vachana Sahitya tells us to consider every human being as human being without considering caste, class, sex.
4. In a socialistic society constructed by Basaveshwara there no monopolies and no privileges.
5. It will helpful for solving the caste crisis arise in the society and maintain the integrity and peace in the society.
6. Through this research keep moral values, relationship in the family life, ethics and humanity it will benefit to one and all.
7. Lingayat sect, traditions, customs, Vachana literature helps documenting history in a well manner.
8. This study will help to preserve the Lingayat sect of India. Lingayat sect tradition and history will be brought to light and its culture will be seen in a broader view.
9. It aids in writing the regional history.

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Mahatma Basaveshwara and Shivasharanas	**Anubhava Mantapa**	**Lingayat Movement**
Salutations to the Sharanas- Haralayya and Kalayannamma	**Vachana Translation in 50 languages by Basava Samithi Bangalore**	**Mahatma Basaveshwara in Marathi Newspaper- Sholapur**

Hindu Scriptures and The Relativity of Time - Vedic Philosophy Meets Contemporary Physic

Sampada Walimbe

Introduction

Throughout history, humans have been fascinated by the concept of time and sought to understand and utilize it. From Centuries, people engaged in deep philosophical reflections on the nature of time. The Vedic religious traditions provided teachings on the essence of time and how to engage with it.

"Time" is something that is beyond the universe itself. The ancient wisdom tells us that there always is and will be a cause and an effect of every action; that is what keeps this universe together. That is where time comes in. "Time" is used to maintain the continuity of all the events that takes place. In Hindu tradition, time is perceived as a universal rhythm that manifests in various forms, from the quick vibrations of atoms to the vast expansion of the universe. Hindu tradition has a profound concept of time, and is based on scientific understanding.

Vedic cosmology offers a deeply layered, hierarchical view of kāla (time), treating it not as a simple linear progression but as interwoven cycles unfolding across multiple lokas (cosmic realms). Texts like the *Manusmriti* (1.64–71), *Bhagavata Purana* (3.11–12), and *Vishnu Purana* (1.3) blend metaphysics, astronomy, and philosophy to emphasize time's cyclical nature—with expansive eras (like yugas, manvantaras, kalpas)—and its relativity, as measured from different levels of existence. At its heart lies the principle that time fluctuates depending on the observer's cosmic vantage—fluid, layered, and observer-dependent.

Ancient Hindu scriptures present astonishingly deep and nuanced ideas about time, space, and reality—ideas that echo many of the central questions and discoveries in modern physics. These scriptures use rich allegory and deep metaphysical discourse to convey how time is relative—often illustrating this through the journeys of sages, kings, and deities as they traverse between earthly and celestial realms. These narratives reveal that time itself shifts depending on the observer's cosmic vantage and transformed state of consciousness. In this article we are going to discuss the concept of Time Dilation and Multiverses explained in our ancient scriptures.

Time Dilation

Time dilation—the idea that time can pass at different rates for different observers depending on their relative speed or position in a gravitational field—is a well-established concept in Einstein's theory of relativity.

There are parallels to this idea in Hindu scriptures, especially in ancient texts like the Puranas and the Mahabharata, which suggest an intuitive grasp of time as relative and flexible. There are multiple stories in Purana, depicting this concept

Narratives of Time Dilation in Ancient Hindu Literature

King Kakudmi and Revati appear in different Puranas- ie. Brahmanda Purana, Bhagavata Purana and also in Mahabharata)

Bhagavata Purana (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam) – Canto 9, Chapter 3, Verses 28–33

King Kakudmi and his daughter Revati travel to the abode of Brahma (Brahmaloka) to seek advice about suitable husband for her.

After waiting briefly during Brahma's celestial assembly, Brahma informed him that 27 chatur-yugas (≈116.64 million Earth years) had elapsed, rendering all potential suitors extinct. Revati subsequently married Balarama, Krishna's brother, after returning to Earth. This implies that Time moves much slower in Brahmaloka compared to Earth—

echoing the concept of gravitational time dilation, where time slows down closer to a massive body (in this case, Brahma's realm).

Another example is story of King Muchukunda, a Solar Dynasty monarch, aided the Devatas in their protracted war against the Asuras. After war finished, exhausted, he requested Devata's for a boon: the gift of sleep so profound that anyone disturbing him would perish. Devata's granted this, and Muchukunda slept in a cave for millennia. Upon awakening, he encountered Bhagawan Krishna, who informed him that his kingdom had vanished, his lineage extinct, and that he now stood in the Dvapara Yuga.

Another story, The Leelopakyam of 'Yoga Vasishtam' gives a clear depiction of time dilations. Leela whose husband expired gets to visit the next two lives of her husband. When it was only one day since the demise of her husband, within that period her husband has lived two lives in some other part of the universe.

In the story of Lord Jagannath in 'Padma Purana', King Indrajyurrma visits the Brahmaloka and spends two second there and comes back to earth to find that yugas have gone by and none of his contemporaries are alive. Later he finds that the people seen like the King, Priest etc are his dear ones in their present birth. They had gone through many births while Indrajyumna remained as Indrajyumna for having space travelled.

Concept of Multiverse

The concept of Multiverse is a recent concept in physics and cosmology. The multiverse refers to the idea that our universe is just one of many—potentially infinite—universes that exist. Based on Various theories like Quantum Mechanics, Inflationary Cosmology, String Theory and Mathematical Universe Hypothesis with common theme of Parallel realities, different physical laws, and infinite possibilities.

Ancient Hindu texts, especially the Puranas, indeed present a remarkably sophisticated and multilayered concept of a multiverse, one that shares surprising parallels with modern scientific theories—yet is deeply rooted in spiritual and philosophical symbolism.

The Bhagavata Purana states:

"There are innumerable universes besides this one… they move about like atoms in You [Krishna]" Each universe is described as a "cosmic egg" (*brahmanda*), enclosed in successive elemental layers, hinting at a vast and infinite multiverse. Each universe is governed by its own cosmic triad (*Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva*) and operates under its own set of laws—echoing modern ideas of "bubble universes" with varying physical constants. Even within a single universe, 14 cosmic planes or *lokas* exist simultaneously—7 higher spiritual realms and 7 lower realms—reminiscent of extra dimensions or layered realities in physics

Seven Higher Worlds:

Satya Loka – Abode of Brahma (Highest, timeless realm of truth and knowledge)

Tapa Loka – Realm of sages in deep meditation,

Jana Loka – Home of rishis and advanced souls,

Mahar Loka – A spiritual realm where time slows down drastically,

Swar Loka (Svarga) – Heaven, ruled by Indra, Bhuvar Loka – Space between Earth and Heaven,

Bhu Loka – Our Earthly plane

These higher worlds are considered progressively more subtle and spiritually advanced, culminating in Satyaloka, the realm of ultimate truth and enlightenment.

Seven Lower Worlds (subterranean realms, not necessarily "hell"):

Situated beneath the Earth, these realms are:

1. Atala – Realm of Bala, a son of Maya.

2. Vitala – Abode of the demon Hataka.
3. Sutala – Kingdom of the virtuous demon king Bali.
4. Talātala – Realm of the demon architect Maya.
5. Mahātala – Home to many-hooded Nagas (serpents).
6. Rasātala – Abode of the Asuras and Danavas.
7. Pātāla – The lowest realm, inhabited by Nagas, ruled by Vasuki

Despite being termed "lower," these realms are described as opulent and filled with pleasures, surpassing even the heavens in beauty and luxury.

In Hindu cosmology, these fourteen lokas represent various planes of existence and consciousness. The higher lokas are associated with spiritual advancement and purity, while the lower lokas, though materially opulent, are linked to sensory pleasures and ignorance. The journey of the soul through these realms is influenced by karma, with virtuous actions leading to ascension and sinful deeds resulting in descent.

The fourteen worlds and their planetary systems undergo repeated cycles of sṛiṣhṭi, sthiti, and pralaya (creation, preservation, and dissolution).

All planetary systems, up to the Mahar Lok, are destroyed at the end of a kalp; that is Brahma's Day of 4.32 billion years. This partial dissolution is called naimittik pralaya.When Brahma wakes up, he creates the planetary systems and their life forms and dissolves them before going to sleep.

The entire universe dissolves at the end of Brahma's life of 100 years (311.04 trillion earth years). The whole material creation winds up. The pañch-mahābhūta merge into the pañch-tanmātrās, the pañch-tanmātrās merge into ahankār, ahankār merges into mahān, and mahān merges into prakṛiti. This great dissolution is called prākṛit pralaya, or mahāpralaya.

Conclusion

The way ancient Hindu scriptures approach time, space, and reality shows a depth that often aligns with — or at least anticipates — some of the most profound questions in modern physics. These stories aren't just myth. They're maps of consciousness, cosmic allegories, and maybe even early intuitive models of the universe. As science pushes into the strange worlds of quantum entanglement, multiverses, and non-local time, the ancient seers might not look so ancient after all — they might look ahead of their time. This ancient wisdom reflects a surprisingly advanced grasp of time and existence, with parallels to modern discoveries in relativity and cosmology. By integrating computational, quantum, and consciousness studies, future research could unlock latent synergies between Vedic wisdom and cutting-edge physics, fostering a holistic dialogue across millennia.

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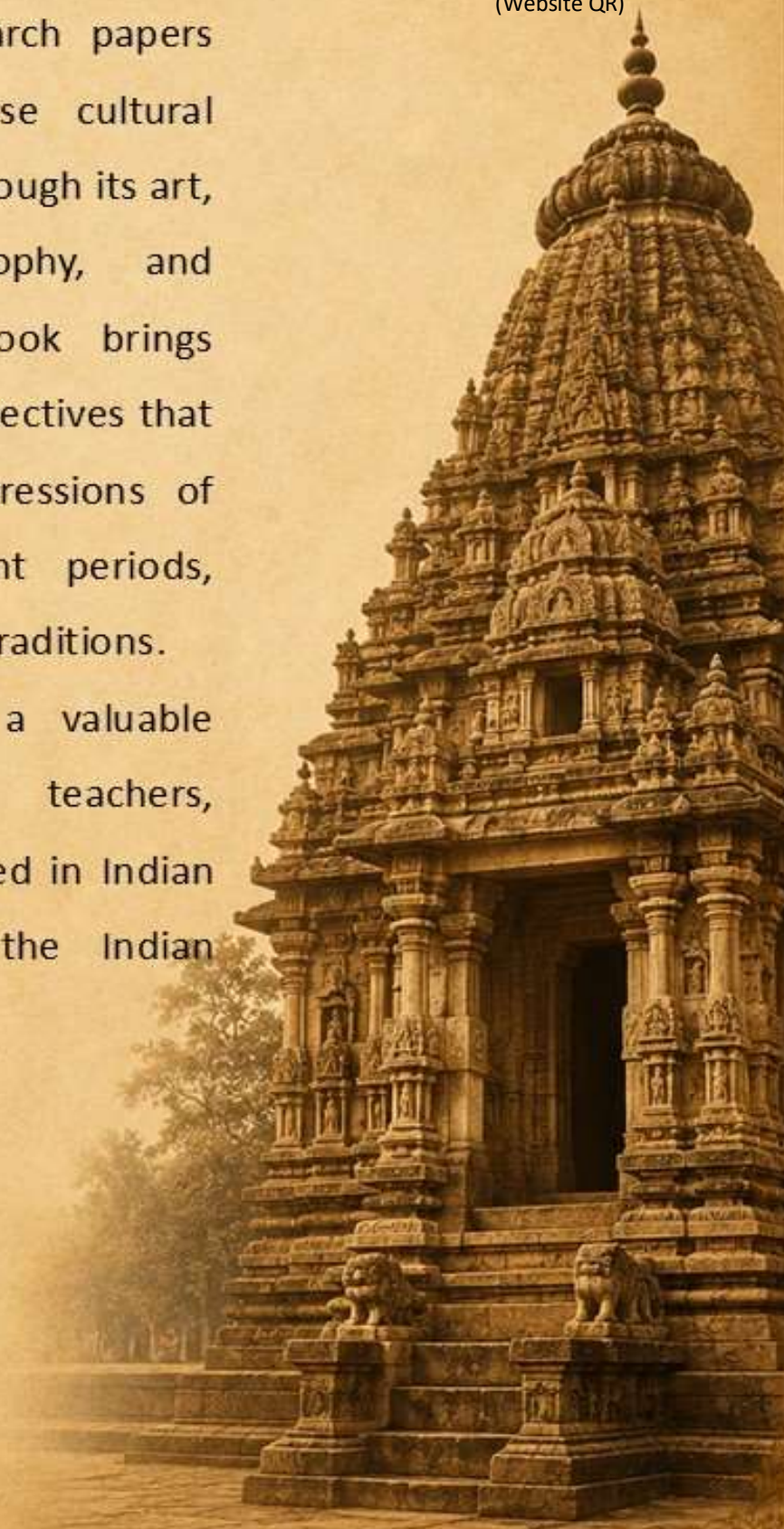
Indian Culture in Art and Literature presents a scholarly collection of research papers exploring the rich and diverse cultural heritage of India as reflected through its art, literature, traditions, philosophy, and intellectual practices. This book brings together diverse academic perspectives that examine the multifaceted expressions of Indian culture across different periods, regions, and literary and artistic traditions.

It is intended to serve as a valuable reference for researchers, teachers, students, and all those interested in Indian culture, art, literature, and the Indian Knowledge Tradition.



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